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Shadow over Asia: The rise of militant Japan

Thomas Arthur Bisson

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SHADOW OVER ASIA

THE RISE OF MILITANT JAPAN

By T. A. Bisson

THE FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION

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SHADOW OVER ASIA
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(In preparation)

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THE RISE OF MILITANT JAPAN

by

T. A. BISSON

Illustrated by

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WHERE THE SHADOW LIES

I. The Shadow

On the morning of September 27, 1940 the cables hummed with news of a momentous ceremony. Japanese diplomats in Berlin had signed a military pact with Germany and Italy. That evening in Tokyo the Japanese people received a message from Emperor Hirohito. In their newspapers they read: "We are deeply gratified that a pact has been concluded between these three powers." The Emperor had spoken. A new alliance had been formed. And a lengthening shadow was spreading over Asia.

TEN YEARS AGO AND NOW

The shadow had first been cast on another September day nearly ten years before, when a railway explosion at Mukden had served as an excuse for the Japanese military to take over Manchuria. As we look back now with the advantage of hindsight, that day—September 18, 1931—looms up as an important milestone. For Japan's seizure of Manchuria ended one historic era, and began another. It abruptly broke up the period of comparative peace that had succeeded the first World War. And it ushered in our present period of strife and unsettlement. Its indirect effects on European developments were also very great. We know that Japan's defiance lowered the prestige and authority of the League of Nations. It showed how hard it was to secure international cooperation strong enough to check determined aggression. Japan's example undoubtedly influenced Mussolini and Hitler in the bold moves they made later on in Europe.

After 1935 German and Italian expansion in Europe paralleled Japan's drive in the Far East. All of these movements steadily widened their scope. Increasingly these three powers played into one another's hands, and helped one another's advance. The anti-Comintern pact of November 1936 drew

them closer together. But they were not formally allied until September 27, 1940, when Japan signed the military pact with the Axis powers.

This pact had startling implications. True, Germany and Italy were separated from Japan by vast distances. As long as Britain controlled the seas, the new allies could not actually join military forces. But Germany had only to put pressure on the French authorities at Vichy in order to help Japan win control over Indo-China. An Axis break-through in the Mediterranean, moreover, could swiftly bring her much greater aid.

TOWARD A "NEW ORDER"

It was this possibility that made Japan's aims, as outlined in the alliance, so significant. Berlin and Rome waved Japan ahead toward the conquest of "Greater East Asia." Until 1940 Tokyo's official claims had reached out only to Manchuria and China. But the new term brought southeast Asia into the picture as well. This area would certainly include Indo-China, Siam, Burma, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines. On its outskirts lie Australia, New Zealand and India. By formally announcing "Greater East Asia" as Tokyo's sphere of influence, the Axis-Japan pact served as a blueprint of the Far Eastern sector of the world order which the Axis alliance hoped to establish.

WHAT IS "GREATER EAST ASIA"?

The new allies were seeking control over three continents. Germany and Italy were bidding for domination over Europe, Africa and the Near East, creating new and urgent problems for us. Tokyo's bid for supremacy in "Greater East Asia" raised problems which were just as great. To many of us these problems seemed far away—much more remote than those of Europe, to which we are bound by so many close ties. Yet we know now that we should be making a mistake if we tried to close our eyes to them.

More than one billion people, or half the earth's population, live in the area embraced by "Greater East Asia." It is thus one of the most populous regions of the globe. Its territorial spread is equally large. Its outside limits range from northern Japan to Australia, and from China and India to New Zealand. The whole North and South American continents, excluding Canada, could be fitted comfortably into this vast territory.

It is, besides, an area of great contrasts—greater, probably, than in any other region of the world. In a score of different localities conditions vary widely—climate, people, language, religion, economic life, government. Coolies working in Korean rice fields are a far cry from English-speaking Australian sheep ranchers, peasants in the remote interior of China from Malayan tin miners or East Indian rubber planters, Indian bazaars under a burning sun from Manchurian cities deep in their winter snows.

A COLONIAL REGION

Another feature of this region became especially important after Germany had conquered several European powers with Far Eastern possessions. For eastern Asia is one of the greatest colonial areas of the world, not even excepting Africa. From Korea to India runs a continuous chain of Japanese, French, American, Dutch and British holdings. Only Japan in the north, and Australia and New Zealand in the south, may be counted as fully independent countries. So this region is the scene not only of imperial rivalries, but of struggles for independence on the part of native peoples.

Thus many factors enter into the international developments affecting this region. Countless threads of policy connect it with Europe. They run to Berlin, and are woven into Hitler's plans; to London, where they tie in with the problem of what naval and air forces the British can spare for the Far East; to Vichy, and the attitude of the French Government there; and

to the refugee Netherlands authorities in Britain taking counsel on the fate of their colonies. Moscow is caught up in this diplomatic network, and so is Washington—their moves can exert decisive influence on the course of events.

JAPAN PULLS THE STRINGS

Yet the main moving force in Far Eastern developments is Japan. In fact, Japan has been pulling the strings ever since September 18, 1931. The challenge to the *status quo* in East Asia proceeds from Tokyo, just as in Europe it proceeds from Berlin. Like Germany, but in even greater measure, Japan has the strategic advantage of a central position. She need not take too seriously the protests of European powers halfway across the globe, and she is well aware that the main centers of strength in the United States and the Soviet Union are almost equally distant. Only Japan, of the major powers, has her home bases wholly within the Far Eastern region.

And so today we are forced to think more and more about Japan. In large part we are concerned with the immediate present. We want to know what Japan is doing, and what she intends to do. Yet we can understand her present foreign policy and form some idea of her probable future moves only if we know something of her past as well. We must seek out the forces that have shaped modern Japan.

So in this book we shall go back to the legendary traditions of the Japanese nation, today being revived by Japanese patriots and preached as a state religion. We shall see how the belief in hereditary power as the privilege of the few has been strong in Japan from the earliest times, resisting the influence of democratic ideas from both China and the West; how even when Japan set up a constitutional government, the seats of ancient privilege were preserved; and how Japan, with her military leaders in the saddle, finally set out on the road to Empire.

II. Introducing Imperial Japan

Japan proper, consisting of four closely connected islands, has often been compared to the British Isles. A map of the Eurasian continent shows the similarity of their geographical position. Japan's island chain is much longer, but it clings to the Asiatic mainland very much as the British Isles cling to the European mainland. The Straits of Tsushima take the place of the English Channel.

Actually, however, Japan is much farther from the mainland than Britain, even in the narrow waters of Tsushima. The steamer from Shimonoseki takes nearly eight hours in crossing over to Fusan, on the tip of the Korean peninsula. This fact has had important historical results. The stretch of water has been wide enough to make invasion difficult—at least until modern times. Yet it has not been so wide as to bar cultural exchanges with the mainland.

JAPAN AND THE ASIATIC MAINLAND

During historic times, for roughly 2,000 years, Japan was never successfully invaded. In 1066 William the Conqueror successfully invaded England. But two centuries later, in 1274 and 1281, Kublai Khan's Mongol-Chinese armies twice failed to conquer Japan. For long periods, when Japan's rulers so wished, they were able to isolate their country more or less completely from the Asiatic mainland.

On the other hand, Japan was close enough to the continent to benefit from the earlier growth of civilization there. From the very beginning of Japanese national life, we can trace significant advances to the coming of peoples and cultures from the Korean peninsula. At times, notably in the seventh and eighth centuries, the flood of cultural influences from China almost swamped Japan and threatened to sweep away her native institutions. During the past century Western influence

has caused equally great changes in Japanese life. Each time, however, a solid core of Japanese tradition resisted destruction, and shaped the new elements into a social pattern characteristically Japanese.

JAPAN'S ISLAND HOME

Many local features of Japan's island home are as important as its geographical position. Its natural beauties have fed the highly developed aesthetic sense of the Japanese people. No one who has traveled the Inland Sea can forget its sparkling waters, or the lovely islands which dot its surface. The majestic beauty of Mt. Fuji is world famous. Hallowed associations enhance its snow-capped splendor for the Japanese.

Not all characteristics of the group of Japanese islands are so favorable. Many of its mountains are volcanic in origin. Several volcanoes are still active. Earthquakes occur frequently. (The disastrous earthquake of 1923, with over 150,000 dead and injured, is still fresh in our memories.) Typhoons, sweeping in from the sea in destructive assault, are also common. So nature contributes an element of insecurity to the life of the Japanese, offsetting the protection their isolation gives them.

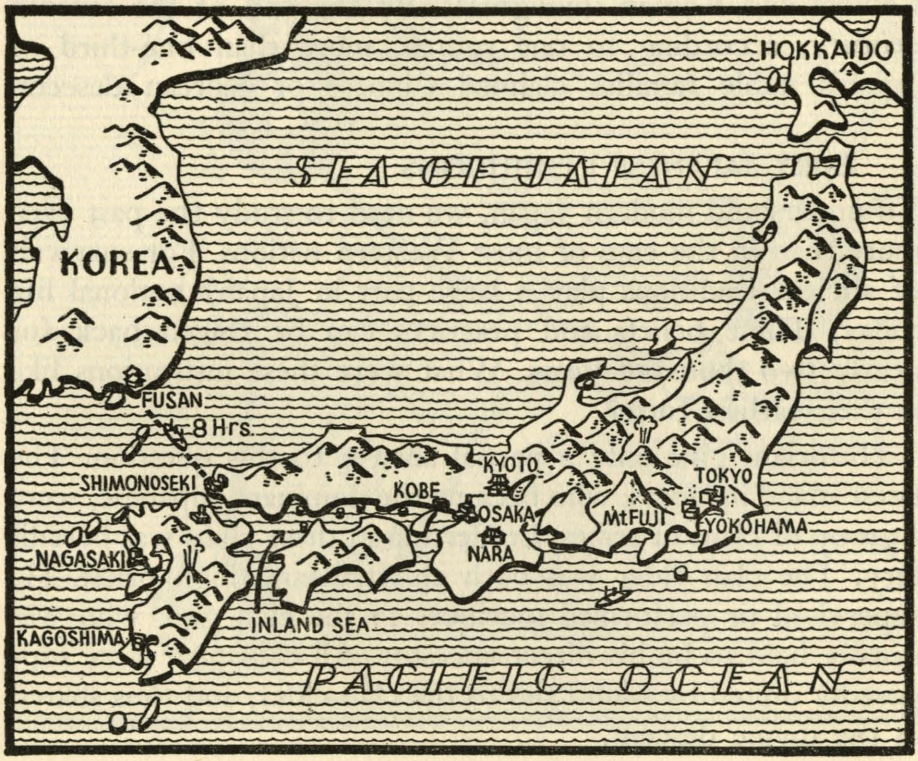
Today other natural features give rise to a more serious insecurity. Japan's territory is small, barely the size of California, the population is large and prolific. Four-fifths of the islands are so mountainous that they are useless for the intensive rice cultivation which is the principal Japanese agricultural pursuit. In recent times, when modern industry became necessary, the Japanese islands were found to lack most minerals. Water power is abundant, and can be harnessed to produce electricity. There are considerable reserves of coal, though not of good coking quality. But there is little iron, and even less of the minor but still important metals. To these factors, which have not prevented the Japanese from becoming an industrial nation, we shall have to return later on.

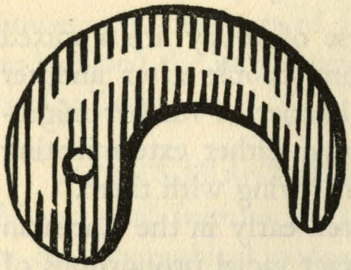
WHO ARE THE JAPANESE?

Like all modern peoples, the Japanese of today are a mixed race. In prehistoric times one migrant people after another overran the islands. The ocean set a barrier to further migration. So the invaders had to settle down, either exterminating the people already there or else intermarrying with them.

The last invasions must have occurred early in the Christian era. Scholars are not agreed on the exact racial proportions of the groups which mingled to form the modern Japanese people. The basic stock is probably Mongolian, the result of migrations through Korea from the north Asiatic continent. There is apparently a southern admixture, coming from either southeast China or Malaysia. Many of these groups were late invaders of

JAPAN'S ISLAND HOME





A Magatama, or bead ornament, common in early Japanese tombs. Often made of jade, nephrite or chrysoprase—materials found not in Japan but in the Ural-Baikal regions.

the islands. They found there an Ainu people, possibly of Caucasian racial origin. Ainu remnants still survive in Japan, but most of them have been absorbed or exterminated in the course of centuries of warfare.

Three main racial elements thus entered into the making of the Japanese people. To the Mongol strain is undoubtedly due the warlike spirit of the Japanese, while from southeast Asia comes a mythology that has been interwoven with Japan's political institutions. Later, there were also many Chinese and Korean immigrants. By the end of the seventh century, according to one source, more than one-third of Japan's noble families claimed Chinese or Korean descent.

EARLY JAPANESE INSTITUTIONS

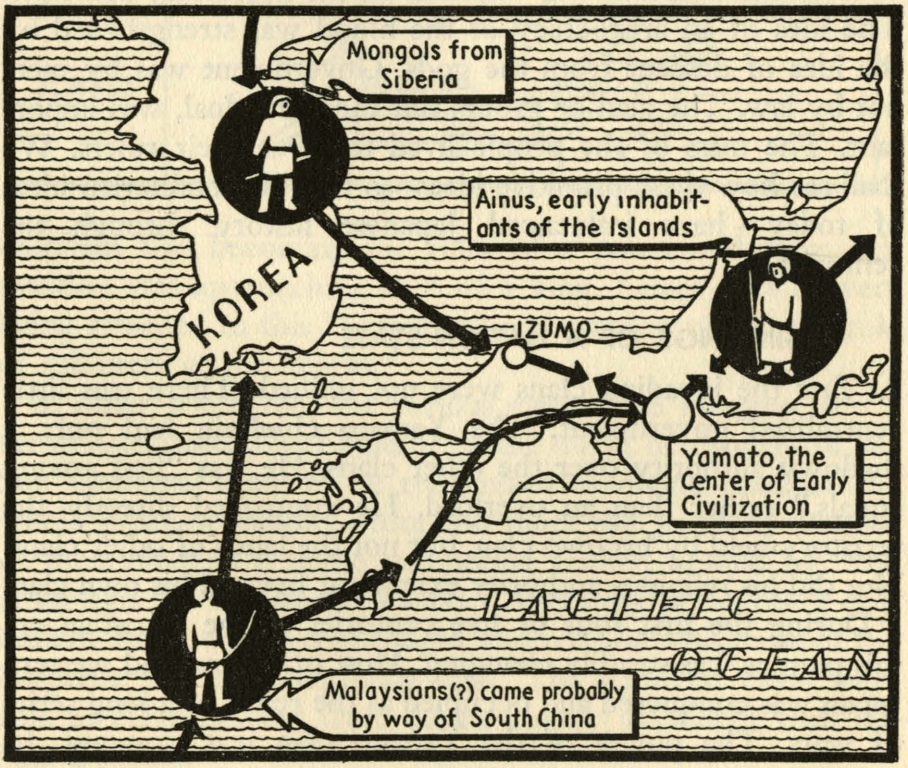
To understand modern Japan, we need to study the past even more than in the case of most Western nations. For survivals of ancient traditions play a large part in Japan's national life today. These beliefs and practices can be traced back for nearly two thousand years. What were these institutions like in their earliest form?

Historians give only a partial answer to this question. The latest island invaders, who became the dominant Japanese, were a group of clans or tribes. Leadership in these clans was hereditary. The clan elder was both chieftain and high priest. He supervised or performed sacrifices to the clan god, who was usually held to be his direct ancestor. All clansmen were supposedly united by blood ties to the clan elder, and thus shared in the divine descent.

"THE WAY OF THE GODS"

Societies ruled by a priest-king, usually called "theocracies," have existed in many parts of the world. In Japan, however, theocracy grew all the stronger because of a mythological tradition, later called Shinto, or "Way of the Gods," centering about a Sun Goddess (Amaterasu). There were many aspects to Shinto, including an early nature worship. But its main feature came to be the story of the Sun Goddess, whose descendants were the Japanese people. Early in their history the rulers of Japan raised this myth to the dignity of a state cult. The chieftain of the Yamato clan, the strongest of all, claimed direct descent from the Sun Goddess. This claim was a very

EARLY INVADERS AND SETTLERS



real thing in Japan. It was taken much more literally than our vaguer Western idea of "the divine right of kings," which persisted until the eighteenth century in Europe.

The clansmen were aristocrats who handed on their privileges from father to son, and to whom war was second nature. But agriculture, in the shape of the cultivation of rice, was already a cornerstone in the economy of this early Japanese society. Under the clansmen were "guilds" of farmers and artisans, who did most of the productive work. Membership in these producing units also passed from father to son. These serfs, as well as a smaller number of actual slaves, were made up largely of war captives, conquered natives, or immigrants from Korea.

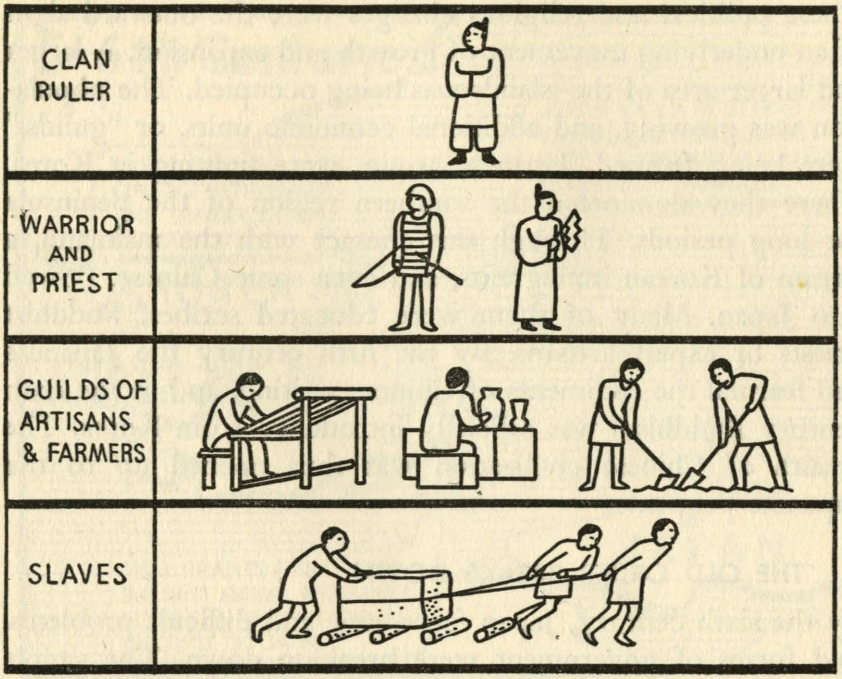
The chief ideas of this primitive Shinto society are quite clear. There was a strong emphasis on the hereditary principle. The idea of an aristocracy of the blood was strengthened by the idea of descent from the gods. Government was by men, not by law. The clan or group, not the individual, was important. The mass of the people lived to serve their rulers. We shall see how these primitive ideas—so like the totalitarian ideas of today—have influenced Japanese history through the centuries.

BEGINNINGS OF A NATION-STATE

At first the invading clans were not unified. There was little centralized government. The Yamato chieftain had only a shadowy authority over the other clans. He was "first among equals," rather than an overlord. He controlled directly the territory held by his own clan, but not the lands of other clans. Nor did his religious authority extend far beyond his own clan.

During the first four or five centuries of the Christian era this picture was steadily changing. Most of central and western Japan was conquered and occupied as the result of a long series of wars. The power of the Yamato clan was growing. Its

JAPAN'S EARLY SOCIETY (5-6th CENTURIES)



chieftain was becoming the ruler of a centralized state. His position was approaching that of a king. Lesser leaders were being attached to this "Emperor," and were assuming the role of ministers at the "court."

In other ways, too, the various clans were merging into a centralized state. The Emperor, as the direct descendant of the Sun Goddess, came to be recognized as divine ruler of the whole Japanese people. More and more the Japanese thought of themselves as a single patriarchal family, headed by "the Sovereign that is a manifest God." Ancestors of the other clan leaders, also divine, were brought into relation with those of the Emperor, but in subordinate rank. The strongest clans were able to claim descent from deities closely associated with the Sun Goddess.

CONQUESTS IN KOREA

These political and religious changes were the outward signs of an underlying movement of growth and expansion. A larger and larger area of the islands was being occupied. The population was growing, and additional economic units, or "guilds," were being formed. Japanese armies were fighting in Korea, where they dominated the southern region of the peninsula for long periods. Through this contact with the mainland, a stream of Korean immigrants, and even some Chinese, flowed into Japan. Many of them were educated scribes, Buddhist priests or expert artisans. By the fifth century the Japanese had learned the rudiments of Chinese writing, and in the sixth century Buddhism was officially introduced from Korea. The wealth of Chinese civilization was thus opened up to the Japanese people.

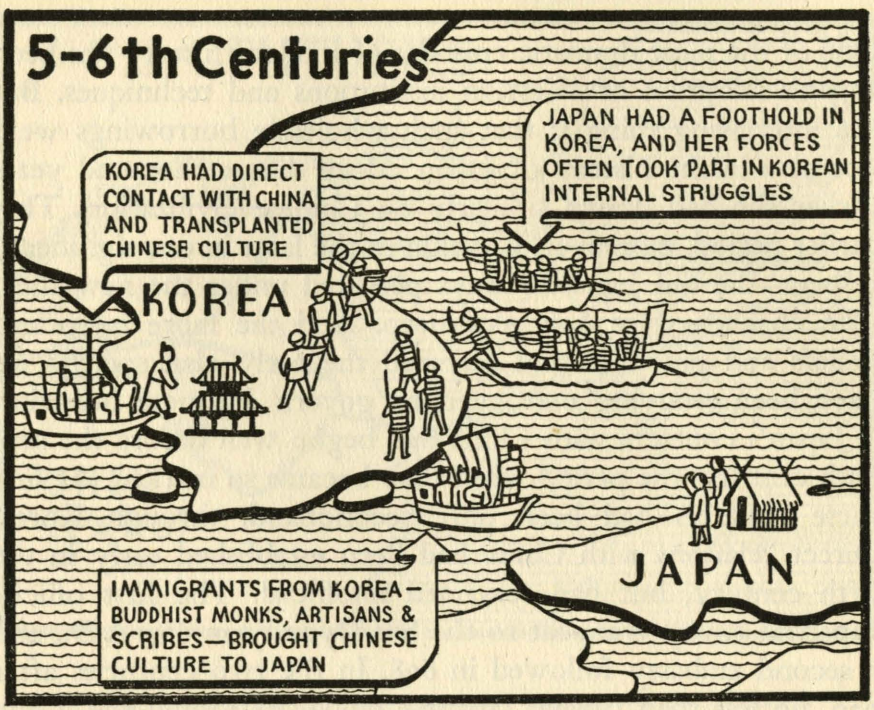
THE OLD ORDER BREAKS DOWN

By the sixth century, Japan faced new and difficult problems. Old forms of government were breaking down. The simple clan rule, based on blood ties, was being upset by migrations within, and immigration from without. New leaders were faking their family trees, in order to claim divine descent. The clan chieftains found their priestly control over the people slipping, and had to try the use of political and military power instead.

Special difficulties arose when new areas were conquered, or large numbers of immigrants arrived. There were disputes between clans, some of which favored "guilds" and some a freer order of serfs. The Imperial clan proved able to get the richest of the new areas, and to extend the lands and increase the people under its control. But this did not settle the problem. For the leading clans tried to control the Emperor, and fought over rival claimants to the throne.

These bitter quarrels threatened to tear the new state apart.

INTERCOURSE WITH KOREA



A more effective centralization, both of economic and political power, had obviously become necessary. The groundwork had been laid, and the times called for a drastic change. The model was sought in China, then flourishing under the T'ang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.).

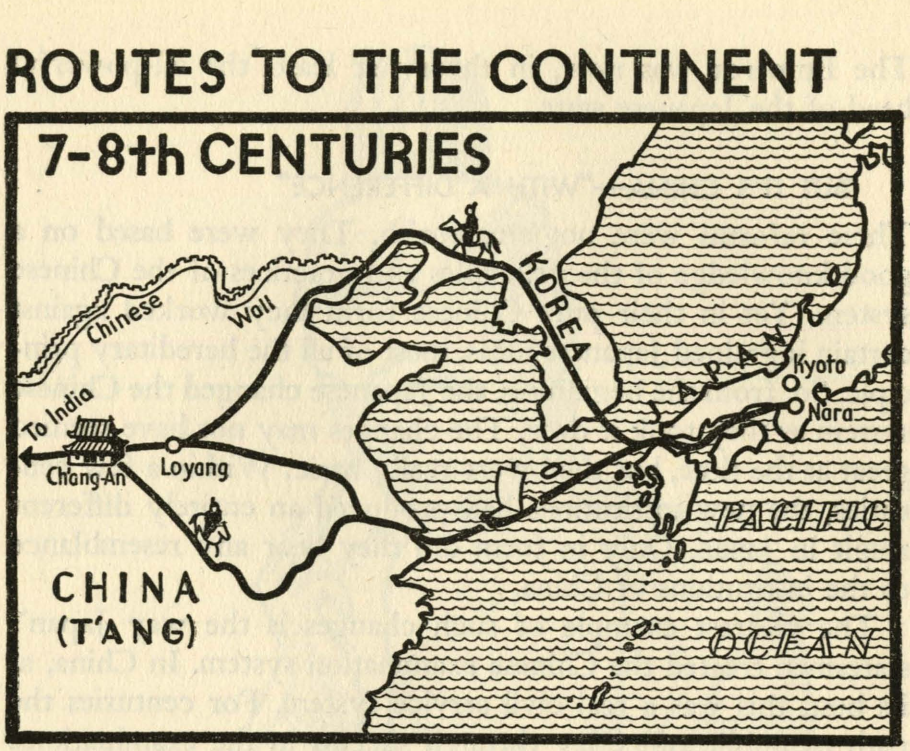
III. Imitating the Chinese

One of the most dramatic episodes of modern history has been Japan's adoption of Western institutions and techniques. But the interesting thing is that such wholesale borrowings were not new in the history of Japan. More than a thousand years earlier she had drawn similarly on Chinese civilization. That earlier period, moreover, was akin to the later in one significant respect—the old Japanese ways persisted under the new shell. The changes were only skin-deep. And the more important beliefs and practices that featured the early clan society we have been studying continued to govern Japanese behavior.

Japan's contacts with China had begun well before the seventh century, the period when they became so marked. At first these contacts had been only secondhand, through Korea. Direct relations with China had been established early in the fifth century, but had remained unofficial. The first official Japanese envoy was sent to the Sui Dynasty in 607 A.D., and a second embassy followed in 608. In the two centuries after 630, no less than twelve Japanese embassies visited the T'ang court at Ch'ang-an, located on the site of the modern city of Sian (see map opposite). These two hundred years were China's golden age, when dazzling Ch'ang-an was the world's foremost civilized center. Japanese monks and scholars accompanied the embassies, often remaining in China for long periods of study. They brought back to Japan a thorough knowledge of Chinese culture—much as Japanese students have returned from Western countries with new knowledge and skills during the past eighty years or so.

CHINA BECOMES THE "GLASS OF FASHION"

Chinese civilization, during the seventh and eighth centuries, was transplanted to Japan on a vast scale. Nara, the new Japanese capital (see map opposite), was built on the lavish model



of Ch'ang-an. Court society became highly sophisticated. The ability to write a good Chinese hand, or turn a Chinese verse, was the indispensable equipment of an educated man. The first national histories of Japan were written—most of them in the Chinese language. Buddhism flourished. Japanese artistic skill expressed itself in masterpieces of sculpture and architecture, modeled on T'ang examples but individual in genius and execution. Native Japanese poetry flowered and, in general, this was the classic age of Japanese culture.

In the field of government the Japanese also imitated the T'ang system. They declared the land "nationalized"—or subject only to the Emperor's control. They reorganized local government, putting Imperial officials in direct control, especially of tax revenues. In China such officials were chosen through an examination system, so examinations were introduced in Japan.

The Emperor was now, in theory at least, the all-powerful head of the Japanese state.

BUT IT'S CHINA—"WITH A DIFFERENCE"

These reforms were not amateurish. They were based on a good knowledge of the principles and practices of the Chinese system. Yet in their pure Chinese form they worked against certain ingrained Japanese ideas, most of all the hereditary principle. So, from the beginning, the Japanese changed the Chinese system as they took it over. The changes may not have seemed great at the time, but they were really basic. Within a few centuries, the new institutions had produced an entirely different result in Japan. Only in form did they bear any resemblance to the institutions of China.

The clearest example of such changes is the way Japan's statesmen treated the Chinese examination system. In China, at its best, this was a real civil service system. For centuries the path to public office lay through success in the examinations. Sons of great families undoubtedly had a better chance of succeeding, and bribery and favoritism were rife in decadent periods. But the "success story" of the Horatio Alger type fills Chinese literature. In not a few cases, the poor but brilliant Chinese youth passes the examinations with honors, and becomes a powerful and wealthy official.

THE ARISTOCRAT'S PLACE IN THE SUN

This system was altogether too democratic for Japan's clan society, with its emphasis on aristocratic lineage. At the very outset it was drastically modified. Training schools were set up, but only nobles of a certain rank could enter them. These persons alone could take the examinations, and qualify for high office. After a time, even the examinations were discontinued. Important government posts soon became hereditary again. Lower posts in the provinces were usually taken by local lead-

"Japanese artistic skill expressed itself in masterpieces of sculpture . . . modeled on T'ang examples."

ers, instead of officers sent by the Imperial government. The higher provincial officials meanwhile stayed at court, and delegated their powers to personal followers in the various localities.

A similar development took place in the case of the land reforms. The land was "nationalized," but it proved impossible to preserve the public domain. The great estates of the clan leaders were returned to them in payment for their official services, and then remained hereditary. Powerful individuals encroached on the public lands, or impoverished peasants escaped tax exactions by joining their lands to privately owned manors, and becoming serfs. In practice, the public domain was gradually taken over by private families, the court nobility or the great monasteries.

THE POWER BEHIND THE THRONE

As these private estates were usually tax-free, the Imperial government was soon deprived of its revenue. And so, as time went on, the Emperor became a mere figurehead. Elaborate state councils and ministries, patterned after those of China, became nothing more than ceremonial forms. Yet centralization was maintained for several centuries, with the great Fujiwara family as the real power behind the throne. This family held vast provincial estates, controlled many of the local officials, and dominated the court. By wedding the Imperial princes to Fujiwara ladies, it reduced the Emperors to puppets. The Fujiwara dictatorship ruled a much more intricate and cultured society than had existed in the early clan period. On the surface, this new society was Chinese; in fact, it was still run in the old Japanese way.

Changes there had been, however. The courtier had replaced the warrior. Instead of fighting clan chieftains, a bureaucracy of civilians now ruled. Buddhism had pervaded Japanese society from top to bottom. The teachings of Confucius had also been

introduced from China. For a time the home-grown Shinto religion was overshadowed, and lay dormant. But it was not wholly eclipsed. The Emperor reigned, if he did not rule. Though the Shinto ritual, playing up the Emperor's descent from the Sun Goddess, might be neglected, it was never lost. Japanese government was still theocratic (centering on a priest-king), even if a Fujiwara pulled the strings and bureaucrats played all the active roles.

IV. Japan Bars Her Door

We must now leap several centuries to about 1550, when the first Western traders and missionaries reached Japan.

The Japan of 1550 differed greatly from the Japan of the Fujiwara era we left behind us five or six centuries earlier. The Fujiwara power had passed away in the twelfth century. Its civilian government had grown weak. It could not even keep the peace. As disorder grew in the provinces, great independent lords surrounded themselves with military retainers on their private estates. A feudal society gradually emerged. In 1185 one of these feudal lords established his supremacy over the others, and soon obtained Imperial appointment as "Shogun," or Generalissimo. The Emperor's court still carried on at Kyoto, but political control passed increasingly to the Shoguns, who became military dictators. A military aristocracy—but a rapidly shifting one—dominated Japan. As new feudal lords grew in strength, they would challenge the Shogun's authority and bitter civil wars would follow. Strife and disorder amounting to anarchy marked the century which preceded 1550.

Then the trend was reversed. By 1590, through the work of three great leaders—Nobunaga, Hideyoshi and Ieyasu—the

country was unified again. In the brief period that followed—say, until 1625—Japan was confronted with a fateful question. Should it embark on a program of military and commercial expansion, similar to that which Western nations were just entering upon? For a time it seemed that the answer might be "yes." In the end, it was "no." And that "no" changed the whole course of Far Eastern and perhaps world history. In 1603 Ieyasu established the Tokugawa Shogunate, destined to rule Japan for more than 250 years. After 1616, under his successors, the seclusion policy was gradually adopted, and Japan was practically isolated from the outside world.

Was this choice inevitable? We cannot really tell. We do know that in the period just before she barred her door Japan was reaching outward toward full intercourse with the West.

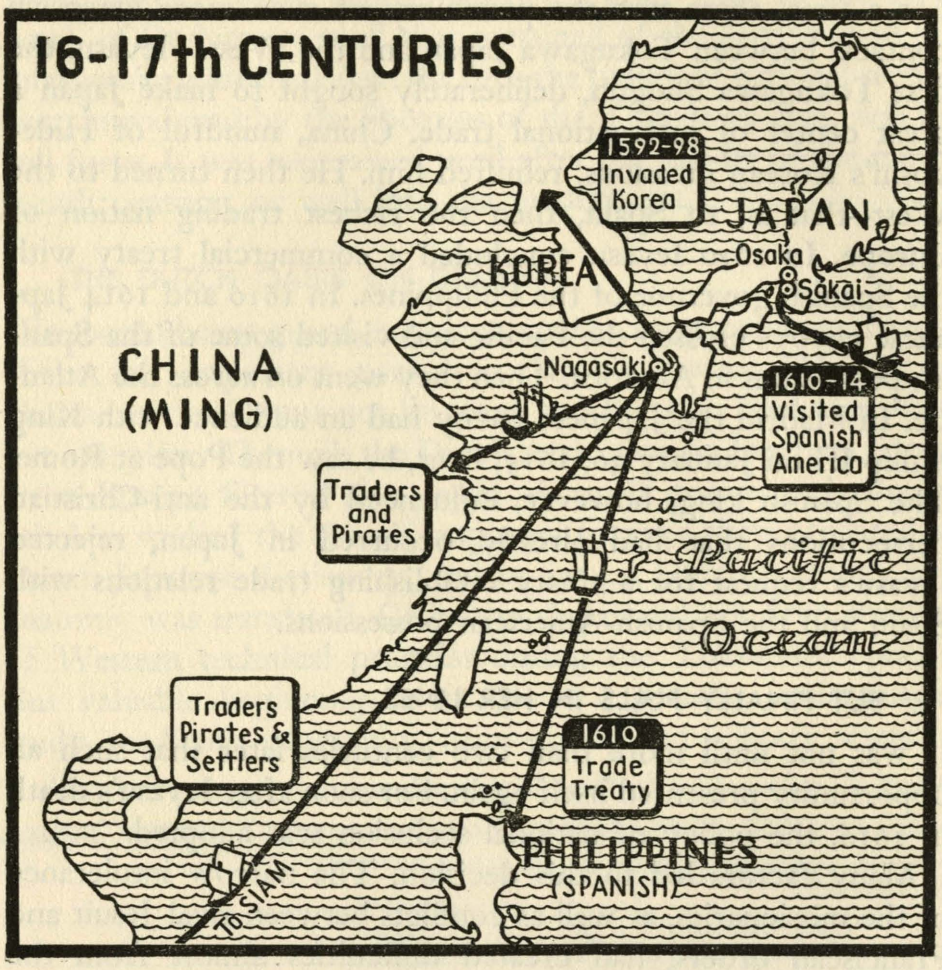
REACHING OUTWARD

For the last thirty years of the sixteenth century were a dynamic period in Japanese history. An excess of energy in Japan seemed to match the urge for discovery and conquest that stirred the rising nations of Europe.

Japan's domestic and foreign trade had been increasing at a rapid pace. Native industries had grown, and trade guilds had flourished. After 1550 this commercial development leaped forward. Sakai, a great trading center, became virtually a free city, ruled by its merchant princes. Nagasaki was opened to foreign trade in 1570, and soon developed into a thriving port. At this time, too, Japanese ships, often on piratical expeditions, were venturing into the waters of the Philippines and Siam. In groups and as individuals, Japanese emigrants were found at various ports in southeast Asia. Hideyoshi even conceived the project of conquering China, but after overrunning Korea in 1592-93, his armies (numbering 150,000 men) were defeated.

After 1550 missionaries and traders from Portugal, Spain, Holland and England came to Japan in growing numbers. The

JAPAN'S OVERSEAS ADVENTURES



Japanese eagerly seized upon Western products and technical advances, notably in firearms and shipbuilding. These commercial contacts with the West modified Japan's economy and stimulated her industrial development. For several decades Christianity, introduced by St. Francis Xavier in 1549-51, was welcomed. Some of the feudal lords became Christians. By 1617 there were some 300,000 Christian converts, or nearly as many as today.

JAPAN SENDS ENVOYS TO SPAIN

For a time, there was the possibility of even more extensive contacts between Tokugawa Japan and the West. Ieyasu, the first Tokugawa Shogun, deliberately sought to make Japan a great center of international trade. China, mindful of Hideyoshi's Korean invasions, rebuffed him. He then turned to the West—that is, to Spain, then the richest trading nation of Europe. In 1610 Ieyasu concluded a commercial treaty with the Spanish governor of the Philippines. In 1610 and 1614 Japanese envoys crossed the Pacific and visited some of the Spanish possessions in America. Then they went on across the Atlantic. In Madrid the Japanese envoy had an audience with King Philip III on January 30, 1615; later, he saw the Pope at Rome. The Spanish king, however, influenced by the anti-Christian persecutions that had already occurred in Japan, rejected Ieyasu's request for a treaty establishing trade relations with Spain and the Spanish-American possessions.

BUT FINALLY PULLS IN HER LINES

It was not until more than two centuries later that such an opportunity presented itself again. For soon after Ieyasu's death in 1616, the policy of national seclusion was adopted.

Many factors led to this decision. The narrow intolerance of the missionaries, as well as conflicts between rival Jesuit and Franciscan orders, had created difficulties almost from the beginning of their stay in Japan. More important was the fear that estates of the Christian lords might become centers of rebellion, and thus lay Japan open to conquest by a foreign power. Persecution began under Hideyoshi, and after 1616 a series of anti-Christian edicts was issued. The Christian persecutions reached their height in 1622-24, although Christianity was not fully stamped out until 1638.

At this time Japanese were forbidden to go abroad, and the building of large sea-going vessels was also prohibited. All for-

eign traders and priests either left Japan or were expelled. A small Dutch trading center, restricted after 1641 to the islet patch of Deshima, was all that remained of the early period of intercourse with the West. By 1650 the policy of national seclusion, introduced by the Shoguns of the Tokugawa clan, was in full force. It was maintained until after the middle of the nineteenth century, or well into the modern era.

THE DUTCH OASIS ON DESHIMA

We should be on guard, however, against some common errors about this important period in Japan's history. The term "hermit nation" must not be taken too literally. Seclusion was not complete. Through the Dutch settlement on Deshima, ideas from Europe filtered into Japan. A small group of Japanese scholars studied the Dutch language. In 1745 they prepared a Dutch-Japanese dictionary, and in 1774 a Dutch textbook on anatomy was translated. Of course, Japan did not keep abreast of Western technical progress during the Tokugawa epoch. But valuable beginnings were made, especially in language study, medicine, geography, map-making and military science.

Another common error associated with the idea of a "hermit nation" is that Tokugawa Japan remained static for two hundred years. In reality great internal changes occurred during this period, some of which were fundamental. By 1850 Japan was a very different country from what it had been in 1650.

The seeming lack of development was most evident in the Tokugawa political system. Its broad outlines did not, in fact, change very much. The Emperor and his court were kept secluded at Kyoto. The real center of government lay in Tokyo, where the Shoguns and their ministers ruled. Most of the land was owned by the Tokugawa family and the great feudal lords (*daimyo*) closely associated with it. About three-eighths, however, was owned by the "outer lords," such as Choshu and Satsuma. These "outer lords" were viewed as

potential rebels, and were denied posts in the central administration. All of the feudal lords had to spend certain months in attendance on the Shogun at Tokyo, and had to leave their families there as hostages when they went back to their own lands.

FOUR CLASSES OF SOCIETY

Efforts were made to draw strict class lines. The feudal lords and their military retainers, or *samurai*, held the highest rank. The farmers came next, but they were severely taxed and harshly treated. The townspeople were looked upon as the lowest class of all. A *samurai* had the right to cut down a merchant with his sword, but very early in the Tokugawa period he learned to respect the power of the merchant's purse.

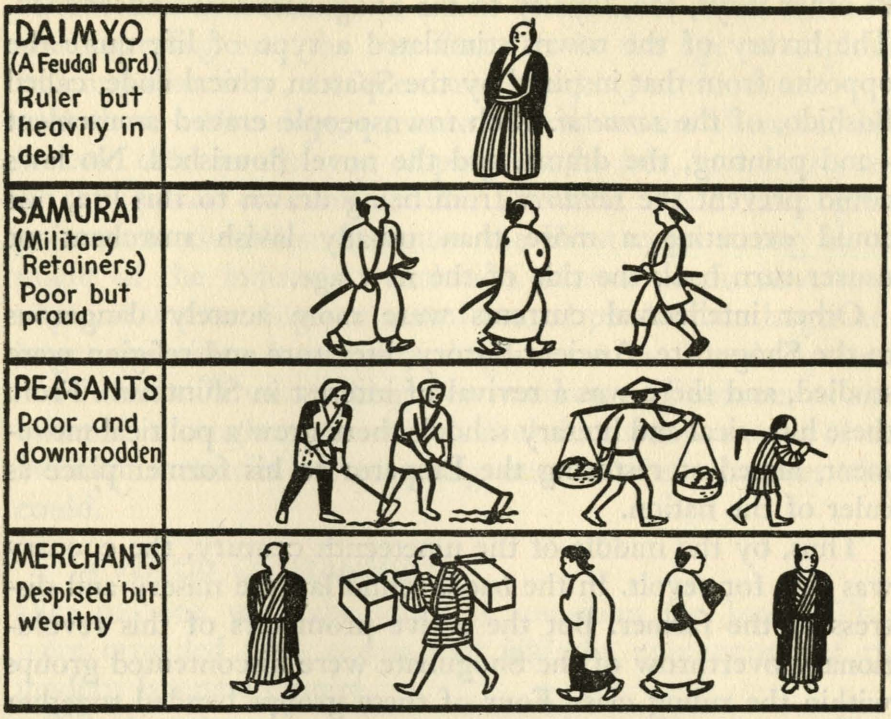
Yet all measures to preserve a rigid centralized feudalism, and to maintain Tokugawa rule, proved futile. Halfway through the period serious economic problems began to appear. By 1850 the whole system was on the verge of collapse.

THE SHOGUNS FAIL TO CONTROL THE MERCHANTS

In their attempts to prevent change, the Shoguns were unable to master one basic element in their society—trade and industry. Even before the Tokugawa regime was established, as we have seen, Japan's commerce had already grown sizable. Foreign trade was then cut off. But internal trade, stimulated by a long period of peace, continued to develop. New luxury goods of many varieties were produced, and industry prospered. The merchant class in the cities grew wealthy and powerful. Large business houses, including the present Mitsui firm, were founded. Money, instead of rice, became the medium of exchange. The transition to a money economy was gradual, but it worked a revolution in Japanese society.

Incomes of the *daimyo* and *samurai* were in rice. The rice had

JAPAN'S PRE-RESTORATION SOCIETY



to be changed into money, and great exchange marts—similar to our modern commodity exchanges—grew up in Osaka. The rice brokers "rigged" prices. Dizzy price fluctuations occurred. The feudal lords and their *samurai* fell into debt to the rice brokers and the money lenders. Government intervention did not help matters. The Shogunate either debased the coinage, or tried vainly to control prices by decree. The farmers suffered most of all—from the change to money, from the price fluctuations, and from still heavier taxes when the feudal lords became indebted to the merchants. After 1725 the number of farmers declined; after 1750 peasant uprisings were frequent.

In other ways, too, loyalty to the Shogunate was undermined. The luxury of the towns stimulated a type of life quite the opposite from that inspired by the Spartan ethical code, called Bushido, of the *samurai.* Rich townspeople craved amusement —and painting, the drama, and the novel flourished. No laws could prevent the *samurai* from being drawn to this life, nor could executing a more than usually lavish merchant or usurer turn back the tide of the new age.

Other intellectual currents were more acutely dangerous to the Shogunate. Ancient history, literature and religion were studied, and there was a revival of interest in Shintoism. From these historical and literary schools there grew a political movement, aimed at restoring the Emperor to his former place as ruler of the nation.

Thus, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the country was ripe for revolt. In the background lay the misery and distress of the farmer. But the active promoters of this revolutionary overthrow of the Shogunate were discontented groups within the ruling class. Four of these groups banded together to bring about the Restoration: (1) the "outer lords" of Choshu, Satsuma and the other western fiefs; (2) the lesser *samurai,* ambitious and energetic; (3) the merchants, who desired removal of feudal restrictions on their business activities; and (4) the court nobles of ancient lineage who still clung to the Emperor at Kyoto. This was a powerful coalition, and sooner or later it would undoubtedly have brought down the Shogunate through its own strength. As it happened, pressure on Japan from Western nations came to its aid and hastened the outbreak of the revolt that was brewing inside the country.

V. How the Door Was Opened

By the nineteenth century, a new flood of Western influence was sweeping into the Far East. As in the age of exploration and discovery, the West was knocking at the door.

In those earlier days, we must remember, the West had had little to offer in the way of progress. In fact, in the arts and in the graces of civilized life, the East could have given pointers to the West. But now the West came strong in the might of the industrial revolution. Master of machine technique, it was turning out manufactured products in larger and larger quantities. It was extending international trade by leaps and bounds. It was seeking new markets and sources of raw materials throughout the world. And the most powerful of the Western countries were staking out colonies wherever they could.

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION

1853 to 1868 were the years of transition for Japan. They were crowded with events that laid the cornerstone of the modern Japanese Empire.

Two broad trends were uppermost during these years. First, there was the coming of the Western powers with their demand for diplomatic relations, trade and intercourse—in a word, for the end of the seclusion policy and the opening of Japan's door. Of course, the Shogun, as the ruling power, had the job of dealing with the Western nations. Too weak to resist, he had to give way. And his enemies at home seized on this opportunity to discredit him. The second main trend, therefore, was the sharpening of Japan's internal conflict.

The extraordinary thing about this internal conflict in Japan was this. The groups opposing the Shogunate were revolutionaries: they rejected the existing system and fought for a new one. They sought progress for Japan—and progress meant opening the country to Western influence. Yet in their struggle

with the Shoguns they were all against the foreigner. The reason is not far to seek. Anti-foreign demonstrations provided a handy weapon for attacking and discrediting the Shogunate. As we shall see later on, when it had served its purpose, this weapon was dropped.

But, meanwhile, let us look a little more closely at the two broad trends we have mentioned. Let us see first how, by a series of steps taken between 1853 and 1867, Japan's door was gradually opened.

THE "UNEQUAL" TREATIES

What happened to Japan in her relations with the Western powers at this time had previously happened to China. For a long time there had been a closely regulated Western trade at Canton. During the early nineteenth century this trade had steadily expanded. China's last-minute efforts to keep real control in her own hands were unsuccessful. The Anglo-Chinese war of 1839-42, and further conflicts in 1857-60, ended China's seclusion and forced the Manchu authorities to treat with the Western powers on terms of diplomatic equality. The treaties signed at this time—later called the "unequal" treaties—actually established China's *in*equality. Not only were new ports opened to Western trade. But a fixed schedule of Chinese tariff dues, usually not exceeding 5 per cent, was also enforced. In addition, Western nationals were exempted from trial under Chinese law. Instead, they were to be tried in courts set up by their own consuls in China. This was the system known as "extraterritoriality."

These events in China did not pass unnoticed in Japan. Many of the Japanese leaders, despite the Shogunate's policy of isolation, were aware of what was happening in China. They began to be alarmed over Japan's future, fearing that the Western powers would soon be knocking at Japan's door. And sure enough, very soon they were.

COMMODORE PERRY BRINGS A LETTER

The visits of Commodore Perry's squadron to Japan in 1853 and 1854, bearing President Fillmore's letter asking for the opening of trade relations, were the prelude. Commodore Perry secured the first treaty, on March 31, 1854. More important was the commercial treaty (July 29, 1858) negotiated by Townsend Harris, first American Minister to Japan. This treaty opened five Japanese ports to Americans for trade and residence, and–like the treaties with China–provided for a fixed tariff schedule and extraterritoriality. It was the model for similar agreements, also concluded in 1858, with England, France, Russia and Holland. All of these treaties were signed by the Shogun, but not by the Emperor. Later, as the Emperor's power grew, the opposition sought to prevent application of the treaties on the ground that the Emperor had not ratified them. In November 1865, however, an Allied naval demonstration off Osaka forced the Emperor to give his signature. Finally, in June 1866, a tariff convention set 5 per cent as the duty on practically all imports and exports.

We shall have to return to these treaties a little later. For soon after the Restoration of the Emperor, they became a galling yoke to the Japanese. The tariff and extraterritorial provisions, in particular, were resented as shackles on the full exercise of Japan's sovereignty. Three long decades were to pass before Japan gained enough strength, toward the close of the century, to revise these unequal treaties.

THE INTERNAL STRUGGLE IN JAPAN

At the time the treaties were negotiated, however, the issue was not one of equality. The issue was whether there should be any treaties at all. For many Japanese wanted no opening of Japan's door. After the first treaties, nevertheless, a growing number of Westerners began to live in the ports opened to foreigners. The cry to "expel the foreigner" was then raised.

Coupled with this slogan was the challenging demand to "revere the Emperor"—a direct call to revolution against the Shogun. The whole country was aroused. It seethed with internal strife and dissension, with plots and counter-plots, and even with armed conflict.

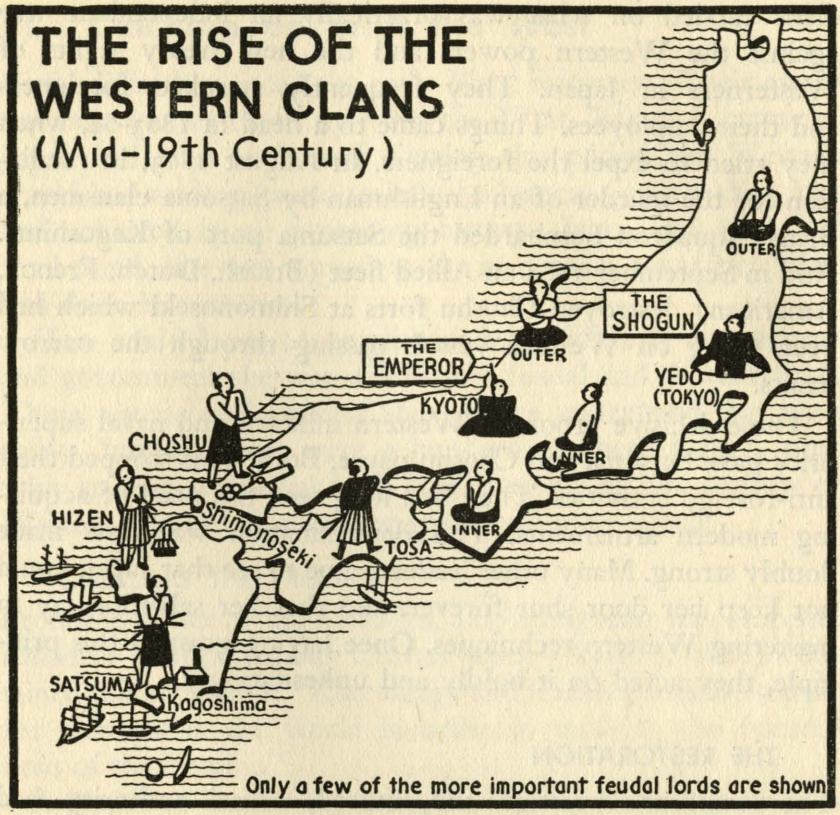
The anti-foreign movement was merely the spark that set off a bonfire that had been long in the making. By 1850 the Shogunate was nearly bankrupt. The feudal lords, or *daimyo*, were in the same position. Most of their landed property was mortgaged to the merchant-bankers—the rising capitalist class. Thousands of *samurai* were poverty-stricken. The condition of the peasantry, taxed more and more heavily to pay for the debts of the feudal lords, was desperate. Even the wealthy merchants, irked by feudal restrictions and the social and political inferiority that was forced upon them, were dissatisfied. The demand for change was growing broader and deeper.

SUPPORTERS OF THE EMPEROR

In Kyoto the Emperor had become the center of an active and determined political movement. Its platform—anti-foreign and anti-Tokugawa—called for the restoration of the Imperial power. The court nobles and a growing number of the *samurai* and feudal lords supported it. Wealthy merchant-banker families, such as the Mitsui house, provided it with cash. Above all, the movement was eventually backed by a coalition of the western clans, notably those of Choshu and Satsuma. The part these clans played, both in the Restoration movement and in the later Imperial government, was decisive.

THE ROLE OF THE WESTERN CLANS

These clans, you will remember, were ruled by so-called "outer lords," who were denied a part in the Tokugawa administration. The fact that they were so far from the center of government at Tokyo encouraged them to be independent. More-



over, they were in many respects the strongest and most progressive of the leading Japanese clans. In developing manufacture and trade as a means of boosting clan revenue, Satsuma, Choshu, Tosa and Hizen were far ahead of other clans. They fostered not only handicrafts, porcelain manufacture, sugar-refining and textile mills, but mining, iron foundries, gun-making, shipbuilding and allied military industries. Choshu also made a revolutionary change in its army, by including commoners as well as the *samurai* in its ranks.

In these western clans, the anti-foreign spirit was at first intense. For some years, in defiance of the Shogunate, the

clans carried on what was practically an independent war against the Western powers and the new treaty rights of Westerners in Japan. They frequently attacked foreigners and their employees. Things came to a head in 1863-64, when they tried to expel the foreigners. In August 1863, in retaliation for the murder of an Englishman by Satsuma clansmen, a British squadron bombarded the Satsuma port of Kagoshima. And in September 1864 an Allied fleet (British, Dutch, French, American) destroyed Choshu forts at Shimonoseki which had been firing on Western vessels passing through the narrow straits.

These decisive proofs of Western military and naval superiority gave Satsuma and Choshu pause. Both clans stopped their anti-foreign activities. They had long seen the need of acquiring modern armaments. This determination was now made doubly strong. Many other leaders came to see that Japan could not keep her door shut forever, and that her salvation lay in mastering Western techniques. Once having grasped this principle, they acted on it boldly and unhesitatingly.

THE RESTORATION

The Emperor's prestige—and, indeed, actual authority—had grown steadily throughout this transition period. As early as 1858, recognizing the Emperor's new importance, the Shogun sought his approval of greater intercourse with the West. In 1863 the Shogun even obeyed an Imperial summons to Kyoto. The advent of a new Shogun and a new Emperor in 1867 made the transfer of authority all the easier. In November 1867 the new Shogun resigned, and on January 3, 1868 the Emperor Meiji, backed by the western clans, formally assumed control of the nation. Six months later the Tokugawa forces, taking the field in opposition to the seizure of power by the western clans, were defeated in pitched battle. A new Empire had been founded.

VI. Catching up with the West

Great difficulties faced the early Meiji reformers. Their essential task was to catch up with the West. For two centuries Japan had kept to herself. During this period the Western world had made gigantic technical advances, greater than man had achieved in all preceding history. Japan had been left far behind. She was forced to do in decades what the West had done in centuries.

How could Japan accomplish such a task? In both economy and government she was still largely feudal and decentralized. There was no real national state, as we understand that term today. Instead, there were a hundred competing clans, each with its own territorial lord. And over all lay the shadow of Western aggression, dictating speed and more speed.

TACKLING THE PROBLEM

From the outset of the Meiji era, anti-foreignism was dropped. Emperor Meiji's famous Charter Oath (April 6, 1868) contained this statement: "Knowledge and learning shall be sought for throughout the world in order to establish the foundations of the Empire."

A period of borrowing from the West, comparable only to the earlier imitation of China, set in. One after another, Japanese official missions were sent abroad. Foreign advisers—British, French, Dutch, German, American—were employed in many different fields. Large numbers of Japanese students entered the universities of Western countries. For a short time imitation of the West went to extremes; in many externals, Western ways became a fad. On the whole, however, there was strict control over the process of borrowing, and careful adaptation to Japanese needs.

In keeping with Japan's traditions, a limited group maintained firm and despotic power at all times. The Meiji political reforms clothed old ideas of government in new garments.

Emperor Meiji (1868-1912) reigned again, and with some degree of authority. But actual power during his long reign lay in the hands of the small group of men who surrounded him. There was no thoroughgoing mass upheaval, forcing recognition of popular rights. Reforms were dictated from the top down.

THREE NEW TRENDS

The great changes which occurred during the Meiji era may be grouped under three main headings. There were, in the first place, the economic reforms which merged the old feudal lords and *samurai* into a new society, and laid the foundations of Japan's modern industries. Then, there was a political movement which led finally to the Emperor's proclamation of a written constitution. Finally, there was a cautious development of foreign policy by which Japan, at first on the defensive, later embarked on an expansionist program and fought its wars with China and Russia. In this chapter we shall look at the first of these trends.

ABOLITION OF FEUDAL RIGHTS

Between 1868 and 1877 a series of basic reforms gave centralized control to the Imperial government. The four western clans returned their lands to the Emperor, thus enabling him to order the other clans to do the same. In this way the government took over the land taxes, the main source of revenue. But the lords, though they no longer held the land registers, were still political rulers in their feudal domains. So, in 1871, an Imperial decree established prefectures, with Imperial governors, in place of the old clan divisions. Finally, the feudal lords lost their private armies. At first, the Imperial government's army consisted mainly of the military forces of the western clans. By 1873, however, the government was able to enforce a system of universal military service, and thus build up a national conscript army under its own absolute control.

Why, you ask, did the feudal lords accept so easily this rapid loss of their former powers? In large part, it was a result of the lead taken by the western clans, whose *samurai* statesmen held the reins in the Imperial government. For they were prepared to back the new measures with military action, if necessary. But a second factor was equally important. The clan lords, especially the great *daimyo*, were well paid for the surrender of their old privileges. Their lands were not confiscated outright. Large annual grants of money were allotted them out of central revenues. But the payments originally promised in this huge pension scheme turned out to be too heavy for the central treasury to meet. The government therefore first reduced the pensions and then, in 1876, compulsorily ended them by means of lump-sum payments, in cash or short-term bonds. Though this drastic scaling down of the original pension scheme amounted to repudiating its earlier promises, the government had no other way of avoiding bankruptcy. As it was, the total cost of commuting the pensions came to nearly 211 million yen—a large sum for that period. In many respects, this way of dealing with the pensions laid the basis of the new Japanese society which has since developed.

LORDS INTO CAPITALISTS

The *daimyo*, or great feudal lords, did not fare so badly in the financial settlement of 1876. They were relieved of all their debts, and of their previous obligations to support their military retainers, the *samurai*. They retained great slices of their former lands, which they now held as private owners—that is, with fewer responsibilities. Moreover, they acquired large sums of money when the pensions were commuted. These sums they invested in banks, stocks and industries, as well as in landed estates. The *daimyo* were thus merged into the new society, no longer as territorial rulers but as wealthy financial magnates, controlling the economic life of the countryside.

So, from their own point of view, commutation of the pensions was a master-stroke by Japan's new rulers. It helped to throw caste distinctions of the old feudal type into the melting pot. It won the allegiance of the clan lords to the new order simply by making allegiance worth their while.

THE LOT OF THE *SAMURAI*

But in other respects this bold reform created a number of serious difficulties. The *samurai* class as a whole was plunged into great distress. A few of them, especially those from the western clans, immediately won high positions in the new government. But most of them were left to sink or swim in a strange new world. Their small pension payments soon dribbled away, and it was hard for them to find means of support. They had other grievances. A law of 1877 forbade them to wear their two swords—traditional mark of honor of the *samurai* class. 1877, too, was the year when the *samurai* were replaced by the new conscript army. During this critical year a serious military revolt, centering in Satsuma but joined by all the forces opposed to the new order, broke out. It was crushed by the Imperial government's new army, made up largely of commoners and partly modernized. Thus the last challenge to the new order was defeated.

HARD TIMES FOR THE PEASANTS

The peasants had an even harder time than the *samurai.* Many local peasant revolts took place in the years up to 1877. Imperial forces suppressed them, and so prevented the peasants from indulging in mass confiscations of lands.

Yet great changes were taking place. For the peasants were no longer feudal serfs. They became landholders, and they could serve in the army. But the individual peasant secured only a very small plot of land. As a private owner, his situation was most precarious. He had to face the risks of drought

or flood, pay taxes in money instead of rice, and cope with price changes in the market. His land soon had to be mortgaged, and could then be taken away by foreclosure. Indeed, many peasants quickly lost their lands in the early years of the new order. By 1892 nearly 40 per cent of the total cultivated area was worked by tenants. This proportion has persisted, while the number of part-tenants has increased.

Japanese agriculture, moreover, remained backward in technique and social organization. The landlords became parasites. Instead of working the land as a capitalist enterprise for profit, they were intent only on drawing high rents—often as much as 60 per cent. This system had far-reaching effects on Japan.

As the number of tenants grew, and the land became divided into smaller and smaller plots, the farm areas in Japan became overpopulated. Only a part of the unneeded farm workers could find a place in industry. Competing for jobs, they kept wages low. Low wages, of course, were a boon to industrial development. But what industry gained in one way it lost in another. For the farmers and the workers were too poor to buy much. The country's purchasing power grew only very slowly. Thus the home market for factory products was limited, and industry did not develop as fast as it might otherwise have done. Very early Japan's new factory industries had to turn to the foreign market. As the limitations on Japan's home market have persisted down to the present time, the pressure for foreign trade expansion has grown steadily more urgent. Here is one underlying cause for Japan's current policy of military expansion.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

But changes in agriculture, as we have seen, did help to make possible the growth of a modern Japanese industry. Peasants who lost their lands, or artisans thrown out of work, became available as factory workers. Here was industry's labor force.

Many other changes helped industry along. Foreign trade, long prohibited, had begun to grow rapidly in the 'sixties. Clan barriers to internal trade were leveled. Hundreds of different kinds of money, issued by the various clans, had circulated. These were now abolished, and a single national currency instituted. Railways were built, and telephone and telegraph systems laid down. These improvements made a freer sale and exchange of goods throughout the country possible. Thus a home market—even if a very limited one—was established.

For the introduction of modern, large-scale industry, however, two further things were needed—technique and capital. Foreign experts, acting both as direct advisers in industry and as instructors in the new technical schools, provided the first of these requirements. The second was harder to fill. The banking-trader houses and the pensioned-off lords had some capital. But it was not enough to finance the big factory projects, especially where quick profits seemed unlikely. So the Imperial government had to step in and supply the capital in most of the larger enterprises. It paid special attention to the armament industries—mining, metallurgy, shipbuilding.

NURSING INFANT INDUSTRIES

The clan bureaucrats in the government nursed the construction of this new industrial plant with extreme care and pride. Many of them fell in love with machinery and engineering technique. They worked closely with the great business houses, grafting industry on to firms that had been mainly concerned with trade or banking. The budding capitalists were not financially strong enough to develop industry by themselves. So the clan statesmen took them into partnership. It was the clan statesmen, however, who headed the combination—an important factor in Japan's political growth, then and later.

But the clansmen did not wish to keep all industry under government control. They only wanted to see that it developed

quickly. Then the businessmen could handle it, or at least all but the strategic industries. The government kept control of railways, telephones, telegraphs, arsenals and naval shipyards. But in the case of many other industries, it supplied the capital and started their development, then turned them back to the great business houses, often at very low prices. In this way the capitalists were spoon-fed by the government. Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo and other houses obtained ready-made facilities in many fields—cotton-spinning mills, glass and cement factories, mining enterprises, shipyards. The giant Mitsubishi monopoly in commercial shipping, for example, got its start through the gift and cheap purchase of government vessels.

By 1890 some 200 steam factories were in operation in Japan. The development of a machine industry was making good headway.

VII. Who Rules Modern Japan?

We are now able to distinguish the main groups which were to rule the modern Japanese Empire. Within the quarter century from 1853 to 1877 a new leadership had emerged.

True to Japan's history and tradition, control was concentrated in a few hands. The ruling group was composed of the clan leaders, dominating the government bureaucracy (since grown to nearly 500,000 office holders); the old feudal lords with great landed estates; and the business group—bankers, traders and industrialists.

HAND IN GLOVE

At the head of this partnership were the clan leaders, and a few representatives of the old court nobility. The clan bureaucrats, as they came to be called, held the influential posts in

the new Imperial government. To a large extent, their dictatorial powers carried on the old feudal tradition. Many of them were civilians, but they also controlled the army (Choshu) and the navy (Satsuma). The business people, on the other hand, especially in the beginning, were definitely in a subordinate position. It was the government which controlled most of the early industrial enterprises, as we have seen. Not until much later, after the World War of 1914-18, did trade and industry reach a size which enabled the capitalists to make themselves felt politically.

It was the existence of the "upper crust" and the inferior status of business that largely determined the character of the new political institutions established during the Meiji era. They were designed, it is true, to serve the purposes of the whole combination of ruling groups. But at the same time the clan bureaucrats took good care to set up the machinery they needed to perpetuate their own supremacy.

CONSERVATIVES VS. LIBERALS

For a decade after the Restoration of 1868, an outright dictatorship functioned in Japan. The powers of the clansmen were almost unlimited. Within the ruling group itself, however, there were wide differences of opinion on some points. One important question was what institutional forms the new government should adopt. Headed by Itagaki (a Tosa *samurai*), the more liberal reformers wanted to set up a fully representative government modeled on the advanced Western democracies. But most of the clansmen opposed such a radical step. In the end, however, the conservatives accepted the necessity of a *written* constitution—which they drew up themselves.

Even this concession was made grudgingly, and only after it had become absolutely necessary. But several factors worked in favor of the liberals. The prestige of Western institutions was high at this period. An article in the Emperor's Charter

Oath, moreover, was interpreted as a pledge to inaugurate a "deliberative assembly." Quoting this pledge, the liberals started a political campaign which won considerable support. Finally, the rising capitalists needed a representative system in order to secure a real voice in the government. Despite all these advantages, in the end the liberals were outmaneuvered in the political arena. They obtained a constitution, it is true, but one which was written and imposed by the conservative clansmen. The result was not a democratic Bill of Rights but a highly autocratic document. With but few exceptions, the liberals' failure at this time was characteristic of Japan's later history.

THE LIBERALS LOSE

The political struggle reached its climax in the second decade after the Restoration. In the press and on the public platform, the liberals waged their campaign. In 1878 they succeeded in getting provincial assemblies with limited powers, and in 1880 local (town, city and village) assemblies. In 1881, riots followed the exposure of graft in the central administration. To save their position, the conservatives had the Emperor issue a declaration promising a National Assembly in 1890—nine years ahead.

But the political struggle did not abate. It now turned on what should be the terms of the constitution which was to establish the elective assembly. The conservatives meanwhile took strong measures against the opposition. They strictly enforced laws curbing the press. They suppressed Itagaki's political party in 1884. In 1887 martial law was proclaimed in Tokyo, and the opposition leaders were driven from the capital. In this way the conservative bureaucrats got a free hand in drafting the new constitution and putting it over.

Hirobumi Ito, its main architect, had gone abroad in 1882 to study Western constitutional practices. He was greatly im-

pressed by Bismarck, and took the Prussian Constitution as his model. First, certain preparatory changes were made. A nobility of five orders was established in 1884, and a Cabinet in 1885. A civil service was started, and in 1887 a Supreme War Council was set up to advise the Emperor on military and naval affairs. In 1888 Ito became president of the Privy Council, which was given authority to revise the draft constitution he had prepared. Ito's work of framing the document was carried out "in absolute secrecy." After it had been read in private to a small group of officials, the Emperor promulgated the new constitution on February 11, 1889. The first elections to the Imperial Diet were held in 1890.

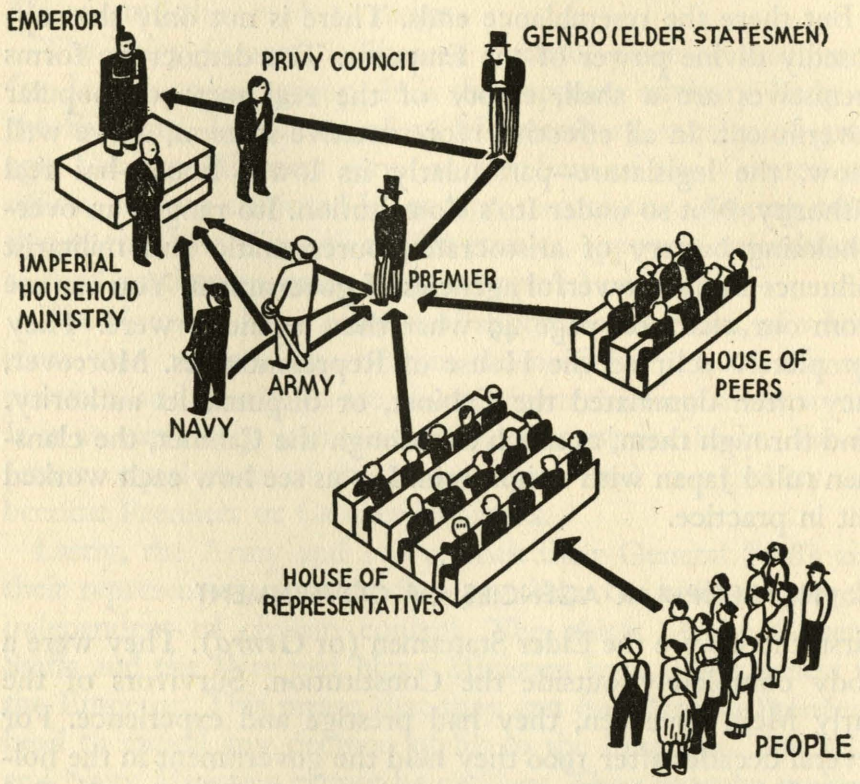
A GIFT OF THE EMPEROR

The Constitution was a "gift" of the Emperor. It was not intended to establish popular government. Its preamble emphasized the old theocratic (priest-king) traditions of Japan. The Emperor "inherited" the right to rule "from Our Ancestors," and ruled "in lineal succession unbroken for ages eternal." Ito and his colleagues not only incorporated these traditional ideas into the Constitution. They made them the cornerstone of the new system of universal education, and thus instilled them in the mass of the Japanese people. Reverence for the Emperor as a divine ruler helped enormously to keep the new regime solidly in place.

Practically all the government's powers, both civil and military, were vested in the Emperor. Vast economic power bolstered his political authority. No longer, as on occasion in feudal times, could the Emperor become penniless. For court expenses, the Imperial Family receives an annual grant of 4,500,000 yen (more than a million dollars). Its holdings in lands and blocks of shares, estimated at over one billion yen, provide a large additional income. So it is one of the wealthiest families in Japan.

JAPAN'S RULING SYSTEM

THE GOVERNMENT UNDER ITO'S CONSTITUTION



THE EMPEROR MUST BE "CONSTITUTIONAL"

The Emperor's powers are exercised on the advice of his ministers, in accordance with constitutional practice. He is not supposed to act on his own authority. Real power, therefore, resides not in the Emperor but in his advisers, acting through the agencies set up by the Constitution. On the surface, these agencies *seem* to establish a system of representative government. There is a Cabinet, and a Diet with two houses—the

House of Peers and the House of Representatives. And political parties like those of the Western democracies soon formed to contest elections in Japan.

But there the resemblance ends. There is not only the supposedly divine power of the Emperor. The democratic forms themselves are a shell, empty of the real meat of popular government. In all effective representative systems, as we well know, the legislature—particularly its lower house—has real authority. Not so under Ito's Constitution. Ito ranged an overwhelming battery of aristocratic, bureaucratic and militarist influence in five powerful agencies of government. You can see from our chart on page 49 what these agencies were. They completely eclipsed the House of Representatives. Moreover, they often dominated the Cabinet, or disputed its authority. And through them, as much as through the Cabinet, the clansmen ruled Japan with a tight rein. Let us see how each worked out in practice.

NON-POPULAR AGENCIES OF GOVERNMENT

First, there were the Elder Statesmen (or *Genro*). They were a body completely outside the Constitution. Survivors of the early Meiji clansmen, they had prestige and experience. For several decades after 1900 they held the government in the hollow of their hands. They made and unmade Cabinets, shuffled the Premiership among themselves, decided on war and peace. Their last representative, Prince Saionji, died in November 1940 at the age of 92. So from now on there will be no more *Genro* to be reckoned with.

Next comes the Imperial Household Ministry. Two officials here occupy key positions. The Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal holds the seals which must be affixed to state documents. And the Minister of the Imperial Household has charge of matters connected with the Imperial Family. These men are not only themselves powerful advisers of the Emperor. But

appointments to see the Emperor must be made through them. So at times they have been able to bar their political opponents from reaching the Imperial ear. Usually they hold office for life or until they wish to resign.

The Privy Council is likewise a useful piece of machinery for Japan's ruling group. It is the supreme advisory body to the Emperor. It consists of 26 life members, usually of great age. Cabinet Ministers serve as members of the Council *ex-officio*, but are outvoted by at least two to one. Among other things, the Privy Council ratifies treaties, approves amendments to the Constitution, and passes on Imperial ordinances.

The House of Peers consists of about 400 members, of whom more than 200 are drawn from the nobility, 125 are life appointees, and nearly 70 are elected from the largest taxpayers. It is an extremely aristocratic and conservative body. Yet its powers equal those of the lower house. And its members can become Premiers or Cabinet Ministers.

Lastly, the Army and Navy, with their General Staffs and their representatives on the Supreme War Council, are largely independent of civilian control. The chiefs of the General Staffs and the War and Navy Ministers have direct access to the Emperor. This means that they can go over the Premier's head to appeal any decision of his to the Emperor. The War and Navy Ministers cannot be civilians. They must be ranking officers in active service. Since they are nominated by the Supreme War Council, the latter body can overthrow a Cabinet by simply ordering them to resign. Or it can prevent the formation of a new Cabinet which it does not like by refusing to offer nominations for the War and Navy Ministries.

THE PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES

As against these aristocratic, bureaucratic and military organs of government, the popular will can be expressed only through the House of Representatives. The position of the House is

very weak, especially in comparison with the normal legislature of a full-fledged democracy.

For Ito saw fit to curb the powers of the Diet's lower house by a series of drastic restrictions. Large fixed, or non-votable, expenditures limit its control over the public purse. If appropriations are not voted, the Cabinet has the right to enforce the preceding year's budget. Most bills are introduced not by Diet members but by the Cabinet, which also possesses an absolute veto. Moreover, the Cabinet can issue Imperial ordinances which, with few qualifications, have the force of law. It can dissolve the lower house, and thus force an election—an expensive proceeding for the deputies. And for several decades only part of the people could vote. Not until 1925 was full manhood suffrage (age 25) adopted. During elections the Home Ministry has often intimidated the voters. And popular rights are further curbed by a controlled press, a strong centralized police force, a large degree of central domination of local government, and the possibility that one may be arrested and held indefinitely without trial (because Japan has no *habeas corpus* law).

The development of a Cabinet with independent power, responsible to the lower house of the Diet, would seem impossible under these circumstances. Entrenched positions were held by the aristocrats, the bureaucrats and the militarists. For if they did not control the Cabinet, always a necessary citadel of power, they could be sure of bringing about its downfall. A responsible Cabinet did emerge in the post-war years. But, as we shall see, this period was short-lived. After 1930, largely through the pressure of the militarists, the pendulum swung back.

VIII. Creating a Modern Empire

By 1890, when the first Diet elections were held, the foundations of a new Empire had been laid. In the few short years since 1868, the old feudal society had undergone a profound change. Agriculture was still the key to Japan's economy, but factory industry and foreign trade were growing in importance. A strong centralized state had come into being. Modern methods were revolutionizing science, education, medicine, law and many other fields. There was an army recruited through universal service and trained in Western ways, and the beginnings of a modern navy.

JAPAN LOOKS ABROAD

The Meiji statesmen were now ready to turn their attention to foreign policy. Even before the Restoration many of the Japanese leaders had favored territorial expansion. During the years of internal reform, however, they had cautiously refrained from rash adventures abroad. A strong movement in favor of a punitive expedition to Korea had developed in 1871-73, but the dominant clan bureaucrats had skilfully prevented the outbreak of war. They had permitted a Formosan expedition in 1874, but had settled the resulting issues peacefully with China. Some small gains had been made. The Bonin Islands were annexed in 1876, and the Liuchiu Islands in 1879. A naval demonstration in 1876 secured to Japan special treaty rights in Korea, which led to more and more intervention in Korean affairs.

But these were not the foreign problems which chiefly occupied the early Meiji leaders. First and foremost, they were trying to change the unequal treaties concluded with the Western powers at the end of the Tokugawa period. These treaties, you will remember, permitted Western nationals to be tried in their own consular courts (the system of extraterri-

toriality), and fixed Japan's tariff at the low rate of 5 per cent. The struggle to throw off these irksome restrictions was the central issue in Japan's foreign relations down to 1894.

FIGHTING THE UNEQUAL TREATIES

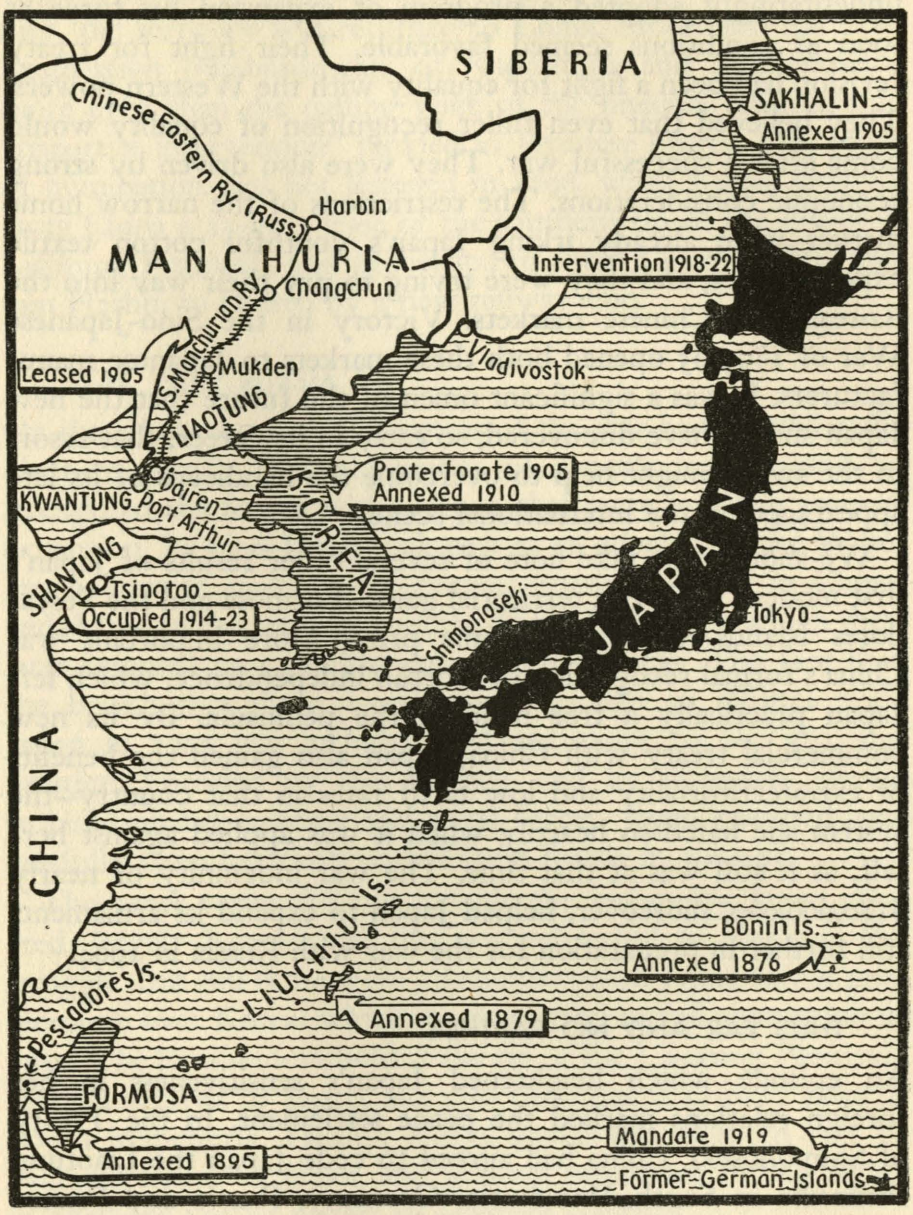
The Japanese made many efforts to regain control of both tariffs and courts before they finally won success. An official mission under Prince Iwakura toured Western capitals in 1871-73 but failed to gain treaty revision. As other attempts also came to nothing, an intense popular resentment developed in Japan. In 1889, just when his negotiations for treaty revision were progressing favorably, a bomb tore off Count Okuma's leg. Success was not won, however, until a new treaty was concluded with Great Britain on July 16, 1894. The other powers soon followed suit. Japan's law courts had been modernized, and she now enforced new civil, commercial and criminal codes. In 1899, when the new treaties went into effect, all Westerners became subject to Japanese law. These treaties thus brought the extraterritorial system to an end. But they all contained tariff schedules that lasted for 12 years, so that Japan did not secure full control over her own tariffs until the treaties expired in 1911.

WAR WITH CHINA

On July 25, 1894, nine days after signature of the "equal" treaty with Great Britain, Japanese naval forces suddenly attacked and sank a transport carrying Chinese troops to Korea. War was formally declared on August 1. Thus, by an unusual coincidence, Japan was at war with China two weeks after she had won her twenty-five-year campaign for treaty revision.

Japan's statesmen had correctly estimated the weakness of China, as well as their own degree of preparedness. They did not plunge into war on a hasty impulse. The army and navy

IN QUEST OF EMPIRE (1876–1923)



were tuned for action. With harsh realism, the Japanese leaders unhesitatingly adopted a program of expansion by force as soon as conditions seemed favorable. Their fight for treaty revision had been a fight for equality with the Western powers. They believed that even fuller recognition of equality would come after a successful war. They were also driven by strong economic considerations. The restrictions of the narrow home market were already irking Japan's youthful cotton textile export houses, and they were trying to pry their way into the Korean and Chinese markets. Victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 opened both these markets to Japanese manufacturers. It was a significant omen of the future that the new Japan should have discovered, so early in its career, that resort to the sword might help to overcome the handicaps of its late appearance on the international scene.

We should also take note of several other results of Japan's first modern war. The territorial gains—Formosa and the Pescadores Islands—were a welcome prize. More important was China's formal recognition of Korean independence, which left Japan practically a free hand in the peninsula. By its new commercial treaty with China, Japan also gained the benefits of extraterritoriality and low tariff rates in that country—the system she hated so heartily when it was applied against herself, as it still was at that time. The war indemnity of nearly $180,000,000, moreover, helped Japan to expand its armaments still further in preparation for the war with Russia in 1904.

THUS FAR AND NO FARTHER

An episode which heightened Japan's sensitiveness in her foreign relations marked the peace settlement. In the Treaty of Shimonoseki, China had agreed to cede Japan the Liaotung Peninsula in South Manchuria. Germany, Russia and France objected to this territorial cession, and backed their objections by an ultimatum to Tokyo threatening war. Japan was forced

to submit, and in exchange for a slight increase in the indemnity, the territory was returned to China. More than the pre-Restoration bombardments of Kagoshima and Shimonoseki, more even than the galling yoke of the unequal treaties, this "tripartite intervention" rankled in Japanese hearts. This sense of humiliation was not lessened in 1898, when Russia secured from China a 25-year lease of the southern tip of the disputed Liaotung Peninsula and proceeded to fortify Port Arthur and join Harbin to Dairen by a new railway line.

WAR WITH RUSSIA

On the whole, however, the gains of the war had proved sufficient to justify the calculations of Japan's leaders, and to strengthen the forces within Japan that were working toward expansion. In 1900 Japan took part as an equal with the Western powers in quelling the famous Boxer Uprising in China, and shared in the returns from the Boxer Indemnity which they later imposed as a punishment on the Chinese. The fact that the British thought it worth while to sign an alliance with Japan in 1902 was an additional testimony to her growing prestige. Fortified by this alliance, and by strenuous efforts to build up her military and naval forces, Japan emerged successfully from her clash with Tsarist Russia in 1904-05.

The peace terms did not include the indemnity Japan coveted, largely because she was too exhausted to continue the struggle. But still there were substantial gains. Japan won a protectorate over Korea, which she converted to full annexation in 1910. The Russian leasehold at the tip of the Liaotung Peninsula was transferred to Japan, and also the Russian railway lines in South Manchuria. Finally, Russia ceded the southern half of Sakhalin Island to Japan, and granted important fishing rights in northern Pacific waters to Japanese interests.

The Treaty of Portsmouth, which set forth these terms and in which President Theodore Roosevelt mediated, established

Japan as the rising power in the Far East. In 1905, three weeks before the treaty was signed, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was extended for ten years, with provisions sanctioning Japan's paramount interests in Korea.

END OF THE MEIJI ERA

In the decade spanned by the two wars, Japan had forged rapidly ahead in her economic development. Her foreign trade, which totaled only 265 million yen in 1895, had jumped to 810 million in 1905 (see chart, page 61). Her steam shipping had shown an even more extraordinary spurt—from 15,000 tons in 1893 to 1,552,000 tons in 1905.

On the political side, the new constitution worked out pretty much as the clan statesmen had expected. For a short time the bureaucrats had some difficulty with the Diet, where a liberal opposition threatened to develop. But they soon checked this tendency. They intimidated or bought off opposition leaders. They embarked on a policy of war and expansion—which the liberals supported. And, eventually, they organized parties headed by members of the bureaucracy itself—in the first instance, Prince Ito.

The Meiji Emperor died on July 30, 1912. During his long reign of nearly 45 years, all the great changes which we have been considering had taken place. From a weak feudal state, Japan had been transformed into a great power. Two years after Emperor Meiji's passing, the outbreak of the World War ushered in a period of still more ambitious expansion and growth.

IX. Japan and the First World War

The World War gave Japan her great opportunity, which her leaders were quick to seize. The conditions created by World War No. 1 might have been made to order for Japan. They brought all her strategic advantages into play, and were ideally adapted to meet her economic necessities.

Japan was not compelled to fight a full-dress war. The Western powers were more than occupied on the European battlefields, so Japan was given pretty much of a free hand in the Far East. And the line-up of powers in 1914-18 added greatly to the strategic advantage of her geographic location. Britain and Russia were Japan's allies from the outset, while the United States could not offer firm opposition to Japanese expansion. Thus Japan was able to achieve a great deal with very little effort.

Conditions on the economic side were no less favorable. As Japan's military and naval operations during the war were relatively slight, the costs were small. On the other hand, her economic gains were exceedingly large. For next to the United States, Japan was the greatest supplier of the warring nations.

MAKING HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES

It was the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, renewed for the third time in 1911, which gave Japan formal diplomatic cause for entering the war. On August 23, 1914 she declared war on Germany.

After a brief struggle, the German forces at the leasehold of Tsingtao, in Shantung province, surrendered on November 7. A month later the whole of Shantung province was in Japanese hands. Then followed the famous Twenty-One Demands on China. On May 25, 1915, at the point of a gun, China signed treaties and notes incorporating many of these

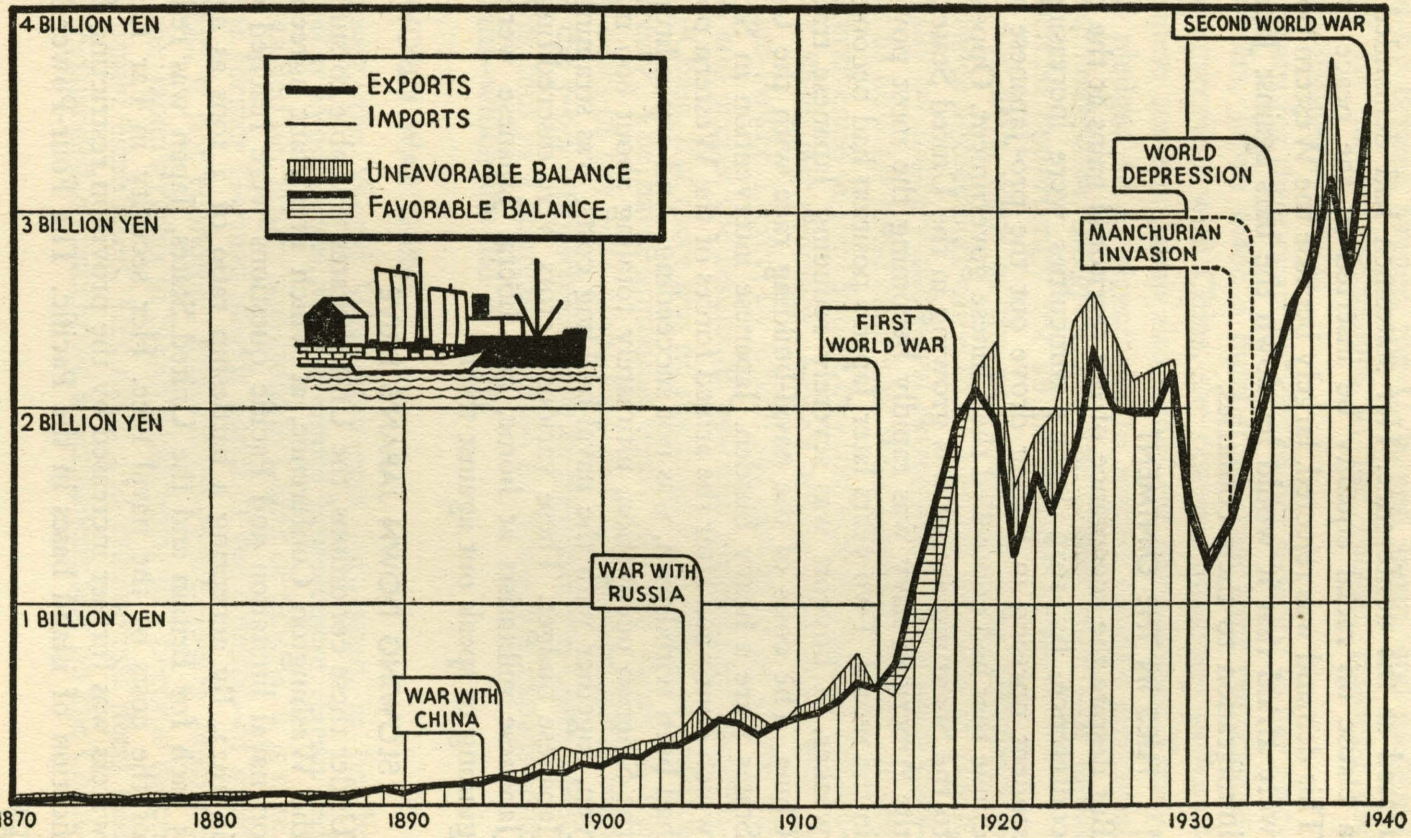
Twenty-One Demands. Among other things these treaties confirmed Japan's newly won position in Shantung province, and extended her railway and territorial rights in South Manchuria to the end of the century. American protests helped to block the most sweeping demands, which would have made China a Japanese protectorate. Meanwhile the Japanese navy had scoured the Pacific, and had occupied all the German islands north of the equator.

THE SECRET TREATIES OF 1917

During the early months of 1917, Japan turned to diplomacy in order to be sure that she would be able to keep her territorial gains after the war. The United States had not yet entered the war, and the military fortunes of the Allied powers in Europe were at a low ebb. Making good use of this situation, Japan negotiated secret treaties with Britain, France, Russia and Italy. Signed in February and March 1917, these agreements pledged that Japan's claims to the German islands north of the equator and to the former German rights in Shantung would be supported at the peace conference. But the Japanese did not secure American support of these claims. In the Lansing-Ishii agreement of November 2, 1917, the United States offered merely a qualified recognition of Japan's "special interests in China."

The secret treaties with the Allied powers were shrewdly drawn and enabled Japan to come off victorious at the Paris Peace Conference. Her newly established position in Shantung province, as well as the extensions of her rights in South Manchuria, were accepted and written into the Versailles Treaty. The German islands north of the equator were awarded Japan as a Class C mandate, the kind of mandate which came closest to annexation. American opposition to these decisions cut no ice, mainly because of Japan's secret agreements with the Allies. On only one big issue was Japan de-

HOW JAPAN'S FOREIGN TRADE HAS GROWN



feated at the conference. Her statesmen had demanded that a clause on racial equality be inserted in the peace treaty. This demand was rejected, largely because the Western powers were afraid that it would let down the bars against Japanese immigration to their countries.

FLIES IN THE OINTMENT

But despite the acceptance of her territorial gains at the peace conference, by 1919 Japan's difficulties were increasing. A student uprising in Peking drove out the pro-Japanese Anfu clique that had controlled the Chinese government. Opposition to the Shantung award was growing in the United States, and the American navy was rapidly becoming the most powerful in the world. Two years later Japan's position had become still weaker. A boycott was severely reducing Japanese trade in China. The costs of the naval-building race with the United States were a heavy burden. Japanese intervention in Siberia, which continued after the armed forces of the Western powers had been withdrawn, was not succeeding. And expenditure on the Siberian occupation, ultimately totaling about 800 million yen, together with the naval-building costs, was straining the Japanese budget. These various factors were discrediting the Japanese militarists at home, and liberal Japanese were beginning to speak out against them.

SLOWING DOWN JAPAN'S DRIVE

Under these conditions, the United States was able to summon the Washington Conference, at which important agreements on naval limitation and Pacific questions were reached early in 1922. By accepting a battleship ratio of 3 tons as against 5 each for Britain and the United States, Japan was relieved of the costs of the naval race. Her security in Far Eastern waters was further increased by the provision restricting fortification of island bases in the Pacific. The Four-Power Pact,

signed by Britain, France, the U. S. and Japan, and pledging respect for insular possessions in the Pacific, replaced the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

In return for these contributions to her security in Far Eastern waters, Japan made a number of important concessions. By an agreement with China, she restored Shantung province to Chinese control. Japan also signed the Nine-Power Treaty, which pledged all its signatories to respect China's territorial and administrative integrity and the "open door"—or equal commercial opportunity for all nations—in China.

In later days, some of the provisions of these Washington Conference agreements came to be bitterly attacked in Japan, especially by military and naval extremists. It is an open question as to how far these criticisms were justified. It was chiefly the effectiveness of the Chinese boycott that forced the restoration of Shantung province. Japan's major concession was in the Nine-Power Treaty, by which she agreed to lay down the sword and accept the results of peaceful commercial competition in China. But there was no machinery provided to enforce this treaty. The naval limitation treaty relieved Japan of the heavy costs of the 1921 naval race and at the same time, even under the 5-5-3 ratio, left her able to dominate the China coast. She was thus in a strategic position to renew her expansionist program—which she did in 1931.

WORLD WAR GAINS

Moreover, the World War settlement for Japan, as finally reached at Washington, was no empty achievement. Japan had not obtained her larger ambitions in China or Siberia, it is true. But the former German islands north of the equator—of great strategic, if not economic, importance—were now a Japanese mandate. Japan's rights in South Manchuria had become much more firmly established. Her naval and commercial fleets had greatly expanded, she occupied a permanent seat on the Coun-

cil of the League of Nations, and she was recognized as one of the half-dozen Great Powers. Japan had also made important economic gains, to which we must now turn our attention.

THE WAR BOOM

It was in the economic field, perhaps, that Japan reaped her greatest gains from the World War. For her shops and factories were kept busy supplying the belligerent countries, their colonial populations, and the American market. Her allies controlled the seas, and Japanese ships sailed all of them. This freedom of the seas was an important factor for Japan, who had become increasingly dependent on international trade.

Japan's war boom was, in many respects, very similar to that enjoyed by the United States. The relative increase in trade was even greater. Between 1914 and 1920 Japan's total foreign trade increased from 1,187 million yen to 4,285 million, or by nearly four times (see chart, page 61). Through 1918, moreover, exports increased much faster than imports. For Japan this meant a chance to stock up on her reserves of gold and foreign currencies, which had always been low. In the 1914-18 period, exports outran imports by 1,460 million yen. This figure contrasted with an import excess of 1,158 million yen during the preceding 20 years.

What we have said so far applies only to trade in goods. But returns on invisible trade items, such as shipping services, were also high—totaling more than 1,500 million yen for the 1914-18 period. The wartime balances for both types of trade came to more than 3,000 million yen—on the right side of the ledger. As a result, Japan's financial reserves greatly increased. Extensive loans and investments were made in foreign countries, and large holdings in gold and foreign exchange were piled up.

Japan emerged from the war stronger financially and economically than she had ever been before. Nevertheless, she was to suffer a series of economic setbacks in the post-war period.

X. Go Liberal, Go Fascist?

Even before the war ended, there had been signs of economic distress within Japan. While the profits from the war boom were going into the pockets of a small group, a sharp rise in the cost of living had caused suffering among the masses of the people. Speculators were profiteering in rice, which soared from 20 or 25 yen to more than 50 yen on the five-bushel unit. In the summer of 1918 there were serious "rice riots," and troops were called out to suppress the demonstrations. During the war, moreover, trade union and socialist ideas had taken root in Japan, paving the way for the growth of labor unions and left-wing parties in the post-war years.

UPS AND DOWNS

Then came the world slump in 1920-21, which led to a sudden collapse of Japan's war boom. Partial recovery had no sooner set in than it received a sharp jolt from the disastrous earthquake of 1923. To meet these setbacks, Japan drew heavily on the financial reserves accumulated during the war. Reconstruction after the earthquake created another short-lived boom —ended by a bank panic in 1927.

Despite post-war difficulties, however, Japan managed to keep her industry on the up grade. The great advances made during the war were maintained and consolidated. In the post-war slump the number of factory workers had declined, but in 1927-28 they reached the wartime level of 2,000,000 again. Throughout the 'twenties, except for a sharp drop in 1921, Japan's total foreign trade continued to hold the new average level of 4,000 million yen. Population leaped forward, from about 50 million persons in 1914 to 56 million in 1920, and to nearly 65 million in 1930 (see chart, page 69).

BIG BUSINESS TO THE FORE

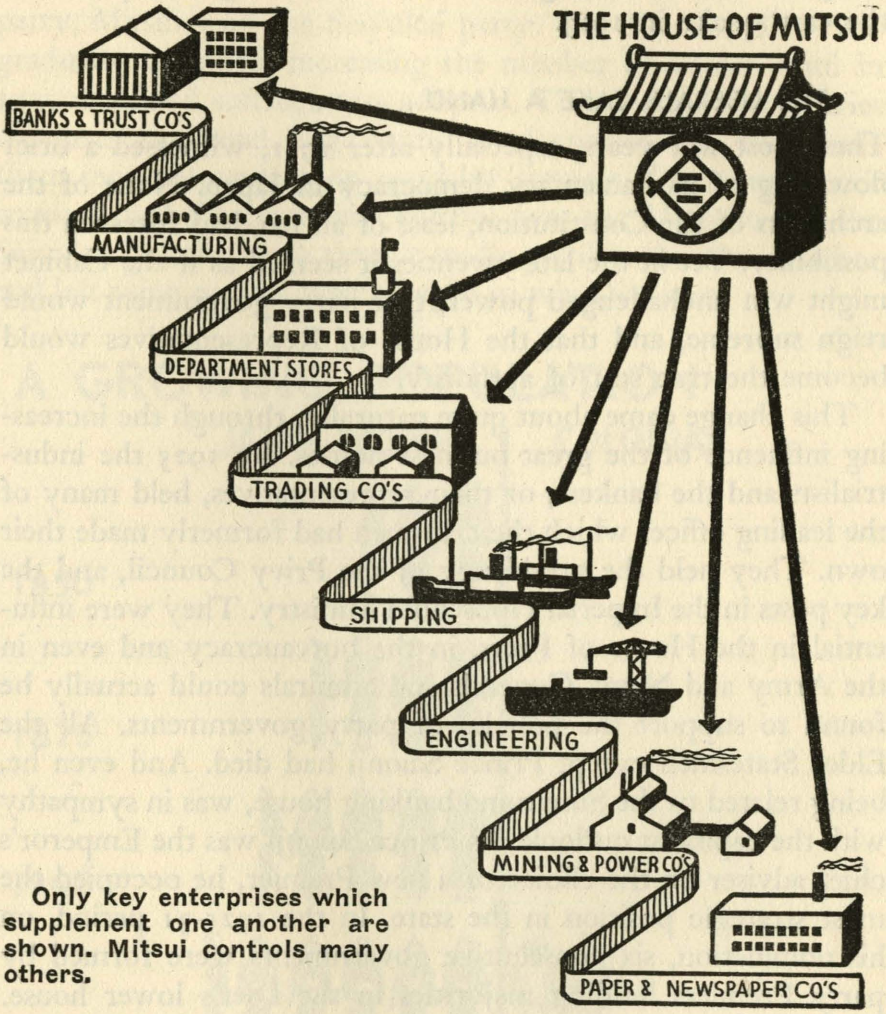
During and after the war, Japan's business groups had come of age. They were no longer subordinate to the other ruling forces in the state. Japan's effort to overtake the West, as we noticed, had led to a close tie-up between government and industry. This relationship had made it easy for Japan's great business houses to become monopolies. From the beginning they had united banking, trade and industry under one roof. Post-war developments, such as the financial crisis of 1927, had carried the process of financial concentration beyond even what was characteristic of Western countries. By this time half-a-dozen of Japan's huge family combines, such as Mitsui and Mitsubishi, dominated Japanese economy. They had become one of the most powerful financial ruling groups in the world.

BUT INDUSTRY DEPENDS ON FOREIGN TRADE

And here we have to point out the striking paradox in Japan's new economic society. It was still largely agricultural. In 1925 more than half the people were dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. But the peasants were too poor to buy the typical consumption goods (automobiles, for example) that were staples in the home markets of Western countries. Thus it was impossible for Japan to develop modern factory industries turning out *all* lines of consumption goods. Only in cotton textiles, with their special export market, and in shipbuilding and metallurgy, serving the army and navy, were large-scale factories practical. In 1928 the greater part of Japan's manufactured goods was produced in industrial units employing ten, five or even fewer workers. Firms like Mitsui and Mitsubishi, however, contracted for the output of these small-scale industrial units and then sold it, often in foreign markets.

Thus Japan, although she had made great strides in some lines of industry, had become dangerously dependent on inter-

ONE OF JAPAN'S FAMILY EMPIRES



Only key enterprises which supplement one another are shown. Mitsui controls many others.

national trade. After 1929, with the onset of the world depression, the difficulties of this situation were plain to see. Quotas and tariffs barred even Japan's low-priced goods. Old sores rankled, particularly those affecting immigration. The Exclusion Act, passed by the American Congress over the President's

disapproval in 1924, cut the deepest. In fact, it undid most of the good effects of the generous aid America gave Japan after the earthquake in 1923.

THE LIBERALS TAKE A HAND

These post-war years, especially after 1921, witnessed a brief flowering of parliamentary democracy in Japan. None of the architects of the Constitution, least of all Ito, had foreseen this possibility. Yet in the late 'twenties it seemed as if the Cabinet might win unchallenged power, that party government would reign supreme, and that the House of Representatives would become the true seat of authority.

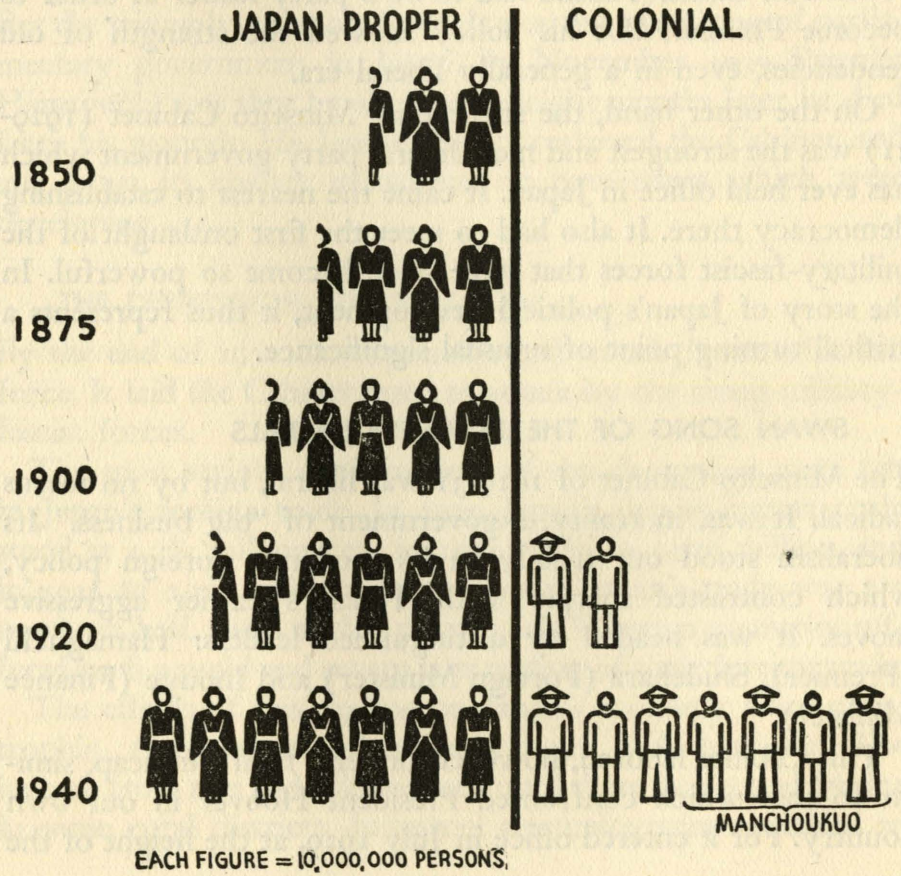
This change came about quite naturally, through the increasing influence of the great business houses. By 1925 the industrialists and the bankers, or their representatives, held many of the leading offices which the clansmen had formerly made their own. They held the presidency of the Privy Council, and the key posts in the Imperial Household Ministry. They were influential in the House of Peers, in the bureaucracy and even in the Army and Navy. Generals and admirals could actually be found to support the policies of party governments. All the Elder Statesmen except Prince Saionji had died. And even he, being related to the Sumitomo banking house, was in sympathy with the capitalist outlook. As Prince Saionji was the Emperor's chief adviser on the choice of a new Premier, he occupied the most strategic position in the state. In the 1925-31 period, on his nomination, six consecutive governments were formed by party Premiers holding majorities in the Diet's lower house.

POLITICAL PARTIES

Party influence, increasing with the growth of capitalism in Japan, reached its height during these years. At an earlier period the clan bureaucrats had manipulated the parties to suit themselves—usually with little difficulty. But as time passed, the

parties formed closer and closer ties with the great business houses. Mitsubishi interests were linked with the Minseito party, Mitsui with the Seiyukai party. The Election Law was gradually amended, increasing the number of voters, until in 1925 manhood suffrage was adopted. This change forced Diet members to spend large sums in electioneering, and made them more dependent on capitalist support. Consequently, it strengthened the capitalists' control over the Minseito and the Seiyukai. At the same time it made possible the rise of labor and left-wing parties, which began to win Diet seats.

A GROWING POPULATION



After 1925 the Cabinets formed by the Minseito and Seiyukai parties began to have to account directly to their majorities in the House of Representatives for what they did. Parliamentary government was by no means fully established, however. An adverse vote in the lower house did not, as a rule, overthrow these Cabinets. More often they fell because of backstage maneuvers in the Privy Council or the House of Peers. Nor were their leaders and policies always liberal. For a time General Baron Tanaka was president of the Seiyukai. He represented the aggressive, militarist wing of the Choshu clan. The Seiyukai Cabinet of 1927-29, formed under his Premiership, carried out a "positive policy" of military intervention in China. Tanaka had to be a party leader in order to become Premier. But his policy showed the strength of old tendencies, even in a generally liberal era.

On the other hand, the succeeding Minseito Cabinet (1929-31) was the strongest and most liberal party government which has ever held office in Japan. It came the nearest to establishing democracy there. It also had to meet the first onslaught of the military-fascist forces that have since become so powerful. In the story of Japan's political development, it thus represents a critical turning point of unusual significance.

SWAN SONG OF THE JAPANESE LIBERALS

The Minseito Cabinet of 1929-31 was liberal, but by no means radical. It was, in reality, a government of "big business." Its liberalism stood out mainly in its moderate foreign policy, which contrasted sharply with Tanaka's earlier aggressive moves. It was headed by distinguished leaders: Hamaguchi (Premier), Shidehara (Foreign Minister) and Inouye (Finance Minister).

This Cabinet labored, however, under a fatal handicap, similar to that which confronted President Hoover in our own country. For it entered office in July 1929, at the height of the

post-war boom. The Wall Street crash, and the spreading world depression, immediately followed. The swift change in economic conditions during its period in office had much to do with its final overthrow.

Hamaguchi and his Cabinet aides began with a great victory on the issue of the London Naval Treaty of 1930. This treaty extended limitations to cruisers and destroyers, as well as capital ships. The army and navy die-hards opposed it bitterly. The people and the press supported the Cabinet's fight for it. On October 1, 1930 the Privy Council ratified the treaty. The Cabinet and the people had won.

For the moment it seemed as if the Cabinet had brought the army and navy under control. Real democracy seemed possible. But the triumph was short-lived. It was the swan song of parliamentary government in Japan. In November 1930 Premier Hamaguchi was shot by an assassin; eight months later he died from his wounds. His loss seriously weakened the Cabinet, and cut down its chance of success on new issues which were developing.

THE DEPRESSION STRIKES JAPAN

By the end of 1930 the depression had struck Japan with full force. It laid the Cabinet open to attack by the rising military-fascist forces.

The most serious consequences of the depression were felt in Japan's foreign trade. In 1929 Japan's export-import trade stood at 4,365 million yen. In 1930 it fell to 3,016 million, and in 1931 to 2,383 million. In two years Japan's trade was cut nearly in half. Even at that period, few Western countries suffered such a rapid and severe contraction of their foreign trade.

The effects of this decline on Japan's economy were catastrophic. Agriculture and industry were both hard hit. The income from rice and silk declined until there was actual famine in some rural districts. Industrial unemployment mounted to

three million, higher than ever before in Japan. The middle-class professionals and wage-earners suffered wage cuts, or were thrown out of work. There was general social unrest, and Marxist doctrines won a wide acceptance. Strikes in industry, and tenant conflicts in rural areas, became commonplace.

In the light of these conditions, the weaknesses of Japan's economy stood out in bold relief. Fully half the home market consisted of poverty-stricken peasants. To put the rural population back on its feet and enable it to buy the products of industry, drastic social reforms, such as rent reductions and debt moratoria for the farmers, were obviously needed. Neither the landowners nor the great business houses were prepared to embark on such a "new deal." The army had a different solution—aggressive expansion abroad and military-fascist repression at home.

This army program led to a finish fight with the Minseito Cabinet. And the army leaders fought—and won—their campaign in Manchuria.

THE ARMY STRIKES IN MANCHURIA

The Minseito Cabinet had been trying to pursue a "friendly policy" toward China. Baron Shidehara, the Foreign Minister, wanted friendly relations with all countries. In this way he sought to foster Japan's foreign trade, and thus solve Japan's economic problems. But he could not control the army, especially after the depression had cut down trade and brought unrest to Japan.

During the summer of 1931 a series of "incidents" occurred in Manchuria, in which the hand of the military was plainly to be seen. At home in Japan the army used these incidents to arouse popular support for "positive" action in defense of supposedly threatened Japanese interests. General Minami, new War Minister in the Cabinet, openly supported this propaganda campaign. Baron Shidehara attempted to reach a peaceful

settlement of the Manchurian issues. But in vain. On September 18, 1931—the historic date we mentioned at the beginning of this book—the army struck in Manchuria. The "Mukden incident"—alleged blowing up of a section of the South Manchuria Railway track—served as an excuse for the Japanese army to occupy the chief Manchurian cities.

This independent *coup d'état* by the army dealt a fatal blow to the Minseito Cabinet. Baron Shidehara was forced into the position of apologizing for the army's actions, though he must have heartily detested them. On December 11, 1931 the Cabinet resigned.

XI. The Shadow Deepens

The fall of the Minseito Cabinet marked the end of an era. The crisis of 1930-31 had unleashed new forces. And these forces were destined to mold Japan's policy in the decade that followed.

At their head was the army. Not *all* of the army leaders, however. At times the "army extremists" seemed to be only a small minority. Their power rose and fell. Yet they took command of Japan's foreign policy, and gained more and more control over her domestic policy. And as time passed, their outlook was increasingly stamped on the army as a whole.

THE ARMY EXTREMISTS

Who were the army extremists? Names are not important, except as labels of a whole group. There has been no outstanding fascist leader in Japan, such as Mussolini in Italy or Hitler in Germany. It is enough for us to note that, in the 1930-32 period, the high army leadership centered in three generals—

Araki, Muto and Mazaki. This trio was supported by a powerful group of "young officers," such as Doihara and Itagaki, who have since become ranking generals.

These men were not from the old clan aristocracy. They came mostly from the lesser clans, or from the middle classes in town and village. They knew at first hand the sufferings of the farmers and the small tradesmen. Like Mussolini and Hitler, they claimed to be the friend of the common man. They bitterly denounced the "corrupt alliance" of the political parties and the capitalists.

All this was part of their fight for political control at home. They wanted a "national socialist" reformation in Japan. By this they meant that the army, under the Emperor, should run the government. They wanted the political parties suppressed and industry run by the state—all, as they said, for the benefit of the common man.

On the home front, the army extremists have had little success. None of their glowing promises of economic "reforms" has been carried out. In the foreign field, however, their program has been largely adopted. We must now see what their aims in foreign policy were.

THE DEMAND FOR "LIVING SPACE"

At the heart of the military-fascist program in Japan, just as in Germany and Italy, lay a demand for territorial expansion. The army extremists made careful plans for a series of bold moves. First, Manchuria and Mongolia were to be conquered, then China, then the rest of Asia. In the past decade we have seen this seemingly wild and visionary program translated into reality to an extraordinary degree. In fact, the actual course of Japan's foreign policy has followed it very closely.

With territorial expansion was linked an economic idea—that of regional self-sufficiency, or the "bloc economy." In 1931, Manchuria was called Japan's "economic life-line." In

1932-33 the watchword was the "Japan-Manchoukuo economic bloc." After 1937 the demand was for a "Japan-China-Manchoukuo bloc." Finally, the slogan today is for a "Greater East Asia," to include the rich territories of Indo-China, Malaya, the East Indies and the Philippines.

What the army leaders were chiefly seeking through this program was to overcome Japan's dependence on the international market. They were proposing a basic alternative to Shidehara's plan for the peaceful development of international trade. In 1930-31 they had seen Japan's foreign trade suddenly collapse, plunging the country into an economic crisis. They were determined that this should not happen again. The answer, they felt, lay in extending Japan's political control over a vast region. The markets and raw materials of such an area, they thought, would make Japan economically independent of the rest of the world.

WEIGHTING THE SCALES

The army extremists were not the only ones to share these views. They had supporters in the bureaucracy, even in the highest positions. Many naval officers also supported them, although the navy as a whole was more conservative than the army. And, despite their anti-capitalist propaganda, they had close relations with some business groups who hoped to profit from the expansion program.

Though the military-fascist leaders did not succeed in organizing a unified mass fascist party, they wielded extraordinary powers. They influenced public opinion through the Ex-Servicemen's Association, with its three million members. They also had a host of reactionary societies to work through. Some of them were dignified patriotic societies, with members from the highest ranks of Japanese society. Others went in for espionage, strike-breaking, or outright terrorism. Finally, the army had its special powers under the Constitution, such as

dictating the choice of War Minister, and going direct to the Emperor over the head of the Premier.

To all these powers the extremists now added two special techniques and used them for all they were worth. One was resorting directly to military action, without waiting for authorization from the Cabinet. Underlings in the field could plot "incidents" which committed their superior officers and the government to certain courses of action. The Manchurian occupation was largely brought about in this way.

The second technique was terrorism, or direct action, against political opponents at home. Public opinion in Japan does not automatically condemn assassination, especially if it appears to have been inspired by patriotic or disinterested motives. The list of distinguished Japanese who have been assassinated is very long—Okubo, Ito, Hara (the first commoner to become Premier), Hamaguchi, to mention a few. Since 1931 many others have been added to this list, and their deaths have all helped the military-fascists to rise to power.

AGAINST THE ARMY?

On the surface it has often seemed that the capitalists were the chief opponents of the army extremists in the political struggle of the past decade. This is only partly true. These two groups have been the strongest political forces in Japan. They have both sought to win the bureaucrats and public opinion to their side. On the other hand, they are in agreement on many points.

For the capitalists, as well as the military, are interested in territorial expansion, and have taken advantage of its results in China. Many of them favored the Manchurian invasion, because they saw that it would give the widespread social discontent in Japan a safe outlet. But at the same time, the capitalists tend to be more cautious than the army leaders in foreign policy. They do not want to take risks, or to plunge recklessly into a big war if the chances of success are slight.

Even on the home front, there is an area of agreement between the army extremists and the business men. Both wish to maintain their ruling position against the threat of social revolution. The Minseito government took measures to stamp out revolutionary groups as early as 1929-30. There is full agreement on regimentation of this kind. But the capitalists have bitterly opposed the army's efforts to take over *all* political power, or to seize control of their business enterprises.

Keeping these general tendencies in mind, we can now turn to a consideration of the events of the past decade.

THE EXTREMISTS TAKE DIRECT ACTION

The "Mukden incident" of September 18, 1931 marked the halfway point in the sharp political struggle which was then convulsing Japan. Its violent phase lasted for eight months longer, until May 15, 1932.

We have already seen the first result of this struggle—the overthrow of the Minseito Cabinet. The Seiyukai party took up the reins of power in mid-December 1931. It proved to be the last one-party government to hold office during that decade. Inukai, its Premier, was a moderate; so also was Takahashi, the aged Finance Minister. General Araki, symbol and titular leader of the army extremists, was the Minister of War.

Not content with having forced a change of Cabinet, the extremists still pressed the attack on party government. Inouye, Finance Minister in the previous Minseito Cabinet, was assassinated on February 9, and Baron Dan, head of the Mitsui interests, was shot on March 5. Both were victims of the Blood Brotherhood League, organized to use terrorism against the "corrupt political parties, slaves of the capitalists." More plots followed. Then, on May 15, 1932, Premier Inukai in turn was assassinated. His death was the climax of an outbreak supported by high army officers, who had planned to seize control of the government.

After this affair, things quieted down a little at home. But the extremists had meanwhile had their way in the sphere of foreign policy. Japanese troops had spread over most of Manchuria. In February the Japanese attack on Shanghai had occurred. In March the "independent" state of Manchoukuo was established. Far from being independent, it was really the plaything of Japan's army extremists who had planned the "Mukden incident."

Another year passed before the Manchurian issues were fully ironed out. In September 1932 the Japanese government formally recognized Manchoukuo. Early in 1933, on the basis of the Lytton Report, the League of Nations passed judgment on Japan. The army at once moved again in Manchuria. In March 1933 Japanese troops occupied Jehol province, and added it to Manchoukuo. In May these troops advanced to the gates of Peiping and Tientsin, and enforced "demilitarization" of the region immediately south of the Great Wall of China. Meanwhile, Japan had withdrawn from the League of Nations. For the time, her conquest of Manchuria had been made good in her own eyes, if not in the eyes of the world.

PEACEFUL INTERLUDE (1933-35)

The period from the middle of 1933 to the end of 1935 was "peaceful" only by contrast with the years before and after. The contrast is sufficiently striking, however, to justify our using the term.

Two strong Cabinets, headed in turn by Admirals Saito and Okada, old-line naval administrators opposed to extremism, governed Japan during these years. The Saito Cabinet had entered office in May 1932, after the death of Inukai. Party men held only a few of the lesser Ministries. Nevertheless, the Cabinet was in the main moderate. The key Finance Ministry, in particular, was in the capable hands of Takahashi, who

allowed only limited increases in the defense budgets. Early in 1934 the fiery Araki resigned from the War Ministry. Araki's successor carried out a partial "purge" of the army extremists.

KEEPING THE ARMY QUIET

There were several reasons for this moderate trend. For one thing, foreign trade had turned upwards in 1932, and by 1935 Japan was again enjoying a trade boom which soon overcame the worst effects of the economic crisis and tended to calm the political waters.

In the second place, the army extremists were kept busy with their experiment in Manchoukuo, where they were trying to realize their goal of "state socialism." They were building strategic railways, and fostering the growth of Manchurian industry. They met with opposition from business interests at home, and found it hard to raise sufficient capital for their projects in Manchuria. In order to secure greater influence over these economic questions, the extremists forced the establishment inside the Cabinet of a Manchoukuo Affairs Board. Here the army was in the saddle. And the extremists did secure enough capital for their projects to provoke the wise old Takahashi into issuing a warning that Japan's finances could not stand such a large and continuing investment drain to Manchoukuo.

On the whole, however, the army men were disappointed with the economic results in Manchoukuo. By 1935 they were trying to bring North China into their Manchurian realm, and thus enlarge their economic bloc. In November 1935 Doihara, the "Lawrence of Manchuria," tried to detach five of the northern provinces from Chinese control. The extremists also planned these moves as part of an effort to strengthen their position at home. For there they were being steadily pushed into the background.

DYING FLICKERS OF DEMOCRACY

Plots were still being hatched within Japan, even during this "peaceful" period. But the moderates were reasserting their control. They kept the high posts in the Privy Council and the Imperial Household Ministry. The Cabinet was firmly set for a moderate course. Even the parties' strength was reviving. The climax of this trend came with the general election of February 1936. For the voting showed that the people had swung decisively away from the extremists. Japan's labor party elected eighteen Diet members, while three left-wing proletarians won Diet seats. It was thought that a new Cabinet, with much greater party influence, might now be formed.

But the extremists were unwilling to admit defeat. Their answer came in the military uprising of February 26, 1936—known in Japan as the "2-26" affair.

THE "2-26" UPRISING

The direct participants in this historic revolt were some 1,400 troops, with their lower officers. No upper officers openly joined them. Yet the insurgents had contact with the highest army quarters. And General Mazaki, an outstanding army extremist, was kept under detention for a year after the outbreak.

A long death list had been prepared. Actually only three high officials were killed: Takahashi, the moderate Finance Minister; Admiral Saito, the former Premier, then Lord Privy Seal; and General Watanabe, who had been responsible for shifts in army officerships. Premier Okada escaped, but his brother, who resembled him, was killed. Outside of Tokyo both Count Makino, former Lord Privy Seal, and Prince Saionji, the last Elder Statesman, managed to escape attacks directed against them.

For three days the insurgents occupied the center of Tokyo. They were finally disarmed when it became clear that the

revolt was not taking hold anywhere else. Once again, an attempt to seize the government had failed. Nevertheless, the uprising caused an important shift in the balance of political power. The trend toward moderation was reversed. Under succeeding Cabinets, new policies were adopted which led directly toward the war with China in 1937.

PRELUDE TO WAR (1936-37)

The chief result of the "2-26" uprising was to give greater power over government policy to the army leaders. This power was not exercised by the extremists in person, because the military revolt had temporarily discredited them in the people's eyes. A new set of army leaders adopted most of their platform, however, and succeeded in putting it across. The public strongly opposed the expansionist and military-fascist tendencies of the new program, but could do no more than delay its realization.

The new program took definite shape under the Cabinet headed by Hirota, a bureaucrat with extremist leanings. It called for stronger pressure on China, expressed in demands for "Sino-Japanese cooperation." The anti-Comintern pact was concluded with Germany in November 1936. On the home front, there were efforts to amend the Election Law in such a way as to curb the political influence of the parties. The new budget included large increases in defense expenditure. Sections of heavy industry, interested in the profits to be reaped from supplying armaments for the defense services, threw their support to the enlarged arms program. On the other hand, popular opposition to the Hirota Cabinet grew steadily. Following strong attacks in the Diet, Hirota resigned in January 1937.

General Hayashi, the next Premier, barred the recognized Minseito and Seiyukai party leaders from his Cabinet. Within two months he had carried through the economic planks of Hirota's platform. Ikeda and Yuki, representing the business

houses, took official posts in order to handle the financial problems. Premier Hayashi also instituted a Cabinet Planning Board, which became an economic general staff for the army program.

THE PEOPLE VS. THE MILITARY

These rapid steps toward a "wartime economy" met with bitter opposition from the parties and even more from the public at large. A wide breach opened up between the Hayashi Cabinet and the people. When Hayashi dissolved the Diet, he was overwhelmingly defeated in the general election of April 1937. Out of 466 members in the Diet's lower house, the government elected less than 50 supporters. It tried to stay in office, but finally, on May 31, had to resign.

The popular disapproval of the military-fascist program was shown quite unmistakably in this election—even more unmistakably than in the earlier election of February 1936. At that time, the extremists had defeated the will of the people by the "2-26" uprising. This time they used new methods.

Under the Konoye Cabinet, national unity was restored—at least to all outward appearances. Party members were included in the Cabinet, and Prince Konoye was made the symbol of unity. But the party men chosen for Cabinet posts were in sympathy with the military-fascist program, and in any case held only minor offices. The chief Ministries were cornered by the army leaders and by bureaucrats who supported them.

But merely setting up a new Cabinet was not enough to quell the widespread suspicion of the army's aims. It was necessary to quiet opposition voices, reestablish the army's prestige and really get somewhere with the "controlled economy" plans.

How could all this be done? Two months after the Konoye Cabinet entered office, Japan was at war with China.

XII. War with China

Few of Japan's leaders expected that the war with China would last for years. Their original plans called for a short campaign of five or six months. North China, Shanghai and Nanking would be occupied. Chiang Kai-shek's crack divisions would be destroyed in the Shanghai-Nanking operations. By Christmas, at the latest, a dictated peace could be imposed at Nanking.

VICTORIES WITHOUT PEACE

On the military side, these calculations proved surprisingly accurate. The victorious Japanese troops *were* entering Nanking in mid-December. And all the strategic railways in North China *were* under Japan's control. But these military successes did not lead to the expected peace settlement. China's national unity held firm, and Chinese resistance continued. If Japan wished to dictate peace terms, she would have to wage further battle.

This she proceeded to do. Two big campaigns were fought during 1938. In May, after a bitter struggle in Shantung province, Japan's northern and southern armies were able to join forces. In October, after an exhausting advance up the Yangtze River, the Japanese captured Hankow. A lightning blow in the south led to the occupation of Canton.

China's main cities, and much of her railway system, were now in Japanese hands. But still there was no sign of peace. By the end of 1938, it was clear that, despite her military triumphs, Japan had not won victory. The war had lasted eighteen months, instead of six. In lives and money, it had cost Japan far more than the original reckoning. And the end was not in sight.

What was happening at home during these first eighteen months of the war? Three main trends were clear. First, all popular opposition to the war was suppressed. Second, the

military took over conduct of affairs in China, allowing the Cabinet little or no say. And third, a "controlled economy" was set up, although the army leaders did not succeed in getting it into their hands. The business houses either pared down the controls, or decided how they were to be applied.

MAKING THE PUBLIC TOE THE LINE

Various measures to gain public support of the war were adopted. The most spectacular was a campaign for "national spiritual mobilization." It began on September 11, 1937 with a patriotic rally in Tokyo, addressed by the Premier and other Cabinet Ministers and broadcast throughout the country. In the Diet the parties expressed their support of the war. Even Japan's labor party, which had elected 36 Diet members in April 1937, swung behind the war policy. The authorities were not content, however. In December 1937, the Home Ministry carried out large-scale police raids, in which hundreds of persons were arrested. Two left-wing labor and party groups, both headed by Kanju Kato, were disbanded without notice. Kato himself, who had been elected to the Diet by a proletarian constituency in Tokyo, was jailed. The arrests also included Baroness Ishimoto, a noted feminist leader, and a great many liberals and pacifists.

All sections of Japan's ruling circles were united in this program of suppressing popular opposition to the war. There was more scope for disagreement, however, over how the war in China should be conducted. But in this dispute the army held all the points of vantage, and soon reigned supreme.

THE ARMY WINS A FREE HAND IN CHINA

Control of military and naval operations in and off China was given in November 1937 to the Imperial Headquarters. This special organ included all the high army and navy officers. Since it decided military policy under the direct authority of

the Emperor, it neatly sidetracked Cabinet control. Non-military phases of policy in China, however, were not so easily disposed of. Here the army used a technique which it had tried and tested in Manchuria. In September 1938 army leaders forced the establishment of a China Affairs Board, set up within the Cabinet but run by military men. Through this board the army kept economic and political affairs in China pretty well under its thumb, despite some continued opposition from the Foreign Ministry. In the broader field of international policy the struggle for power was more acute. It still continues, although the army eventually became strong enough to put through the alliance with Germany and Italy.

THE ECONOMIC WAR MACHINE

The third main trend of which we spoke was the establishment of a wartime "controlled economy" in Japan. The state took over more and more control of the economic life of the country. Both army and businessmen agreed that such control was necessary, but bitterly disagreed as to how it should be applied. On the whole, the businessmen managed to keep the most important economic regulations in their own hands.

The fiercest political struggle during 1938 was waged over the National Mobilization Bill. Drafted by the Planning Board under army influence, this measure called for drastic economic conscription. The government was to have practically unlimited control of social and economic life, including finance, industry, trade, labor and the press. With respect to labor, the bill provided for compulsory allocation of workers to their jobs, prohibited strikes and lockouts, and empowered the government to fix wages, hours and working conditions.

This bill met with determined opposition in the Diet. Army supporters, using pressure and intimidation, including terroristic attacks on Diet members and on party headquarters in Tokyo, pushed it through. Nevertheless, the opposition did

force certain modifications in the original plan. Premier Konoye pledged that it would be applied only during a wartime emergency and not invoked in the Sino-Japanese conflict, which was still referred to in Japan as an "incident." The Premier also agreed to appoint a majority of Diet members to the National Mobilization Council. This Council was to be consulted before Imperial ordinances applying various sections of the bill were issued.

But on May 5, 1938, despite Konoye's pledge to the Diet, several of the main provisions of the bill *were* applied, and new ordinances issued since have put many others into effect. Before Premier Konoye's resignation in January 1939, a broad series of control measures was in operation. Foreign exchange was strictly licensed. To make up the huge war budgets the government had taken over control of capital, and restricted new investment to a list of so-called "essential" industries. It also rigidly regulated trade, limiting the export and import of several hundred commodities. It put the labor control provisions of the National Mobilization Act into effect. In June 1938 it instituted nation-wide price control for certain commodities, and has since steadily increased the list of such goods. The Home Ministry enrolled several thousand "economic police" officers to enforce the price schedules and other features of the economic program.

THE MEN AT THE CONTROLS

But despite the sweeping nature of these provisions, the business houses managed to keep a fair amount of independence. Their own men took key positions in many of the agencies that were enforcing the control measures. In the field of capital investment, they could still tip the scales. They successfully resisted army pressure for outright state control and operation of industry. Nationalization of the vital electric power industry, for instance, over which they fought long and

bitterly, was finally put through only part way, and has been a subject of continued dispute.

So it was not the military leaders alone, but the military leaders in an uneasy partnership with the businessmen and the party heads, who carried out the wartime economic program. The army fascists charted the program, it is true, but they were not allowed to run it in their own sweet way. The army ruled in China, as it had in Manchuria. But it was not the unchallenged dictator at home. There, it shared power with "big business." And big business, despite war restrictions, still operated its own enterprises and still reaped its dividends.

STALEMATE IN CHINA

A Cabinet under Prince Konoye had held office throughout the first phase of the war in China. It resigned in January 1939, when China's refusal to accept a dictated peace had become unmistakable. For Japan now no longer won spectacular victories. A stalemate had developed, and the war had become a war of attrition. This second phase of the war lasted for another eighteen months—until June 1940, when Hitler's victories in Europe shifted the balance of power in the Far East.

The costs to Japan of this second period were no less than before. She had to maintain the same number of troops in China, totaling 800,000 or 1,000,000. Heavy fighting was taking place almost continuously. But the hostilities, ranging from Canton to Inner Mongolia, led to no decisive results. In some cases Japan occupied new cities, such as Nanchang, Nanning and Ichang. In other cases Japanese offensives were disastrously routed. Chinese guerrillas, ranging far and wide, limited Japan's area of effective control, even in the so-called "occupied" territory. Moreover, the economic gains were not as great as the army had expected. Sales of Japanese goods to China steadily increased, but imports of Chinese raw materials either declined or rose very slowly.

STEPPING ON WESTERN TOES

At the same time Japan's interference with the interests of the Western powers in China became much more direct, and created serious friction. Difficulties were most acute at Tientsin, Shanghai and Amoy. The Japanese army imposed various restrictions. It kept Western shipping off the Yangtze River above Shanghai, and the Pearl River below Canton. Western traders had to face many practices—tariffs, exchange controls, import and export controls—which were put into effect especially to hamper their trade. The Japanese enforced a blockade of the British and French Concessions at Tientsin, and stripped British citizens for examination before allowing them to enter or leave their Concession. Although the Western powers resented these Japanese actions, they limited their opposition mainly to protests. In July 1939 the United States abrogated its trade treaty with Japan, but did not follow up this step by imposing trade penalties.

THREE JAPANESE WAR CABINETS

Difficulties on Japan's home front mounted steadily during the second phase of the war. The strain was shown in many ways. One was the rapidity with which Cabinets succeeded one another. The first Konoye Cabinet, as we have seen, had held office for nineteen months—from June 1937 to January 1939. In the second period (January 1939 to July 1940), there were no less than three Cabinets. Their average length of life was only six months. These Cabinets, with their Premiers, held office as follows:

1. Baron Kiichiro Hiranuma, January 5, 1939 to August 29, 1939
2. General Nobuyuki Abe, August 30, 1939 to January 15, 1940
3. Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai, January 16, 1940 to July 16, 1940.

HIRANUMA AND THE NAZI-SOVIET PACT

Many of the decisive events of this period were closely related to the Cabinet changes. Hiranuma, for example, was forced out of office by the Soviet-German pact of August 23, 1939. During that summer the Hiranuma Cabinet had been dickering with Germany over the details of a proposed military pact, while the Japanese army had been fighting a minor war with the Soviet Union on the Outer Mongolian frontier. So the Soviet-German pact came as a stunning blow to Tokyo, and for a time feelings against Germany ran high. The army extremists, who had strongly advocated an alliance with Germany, were discredited along with Hiranuma. Consequently, extremist influence was not so great in the next two Cabinets, headed by General Abe and Admiral Yonai.

ABE AND THE PRICE OF RICE

The Abe Cabinet was overthrown five months later for reasons entirely different, but equally significant. Here the issue turned mainly on Japan's growing economic difficulties. During the winter of 1939-40 a rice shortage developed, and "bootleg" prices soared toward 50 yen per *koku* (the five bushel unit)—dangerously close to the level which stimulated the "rice riots" of 1918. In September 1938 the Abe Cabinet had fixed ceilings on all prices. When the rice shortage developed, it had to back down on its own ruling. In November it raised the official price from 38 to 43 yen per *koku.* By this time, however, the farmers had already sold their crops, and the gains were reaped by the rice dealers.

Outspoken criticisms were expected in the Diet and, rather than meet them, the Abe Cabinet resigned in mid-January. The incoming Yonai Cabinet had to face the music. One outspoken member of the Minseito party, Takao Saito, challenged not only economic conditions, but the war itself. His striking speech of February 2, 1940 attacked Wang Ching-wei's pro-

posed regime (Japan's puppet government) in China as nothing more than a "central government in name." After casting doubt on the prospects of achieving the "new order in East Asia," he asked what the Japanese people had received in return for their great sacrifices in the war. Even more serious, in the eyes of Japan's army leaders, was Saito's declaration that, in view of China's large territory and army, it "is doubtful whether Japan can overthrow" Chiang Kai-shek's regime. A critical electric power "famine" which developed at this time, and forced many factories to shut down, underlined the truth in Saito's remarks. The Japanese people backed Saito so strongly that several months passed before the authorities dared to expel him from the Diet.

YONAI TRAILS TOO FAR BEHIND NAZI PUSH

But Hitler's military victories in the spring of 1940, and especially the defeat of France, swiftly altered Japan's position in the Far East. The "moderation" which the Abe and Yonai Cabinets had shown in foreign policy suddenly vanished. Intense pressure was brought to bear on the French authorities in the Far East. In June the French Ambassador at Tokyo agreed to stop shipments of goods to China over the Indo-China Railway. Less than a month later, the British government also bowed to the Japanese demand that the Burma Road be closed for three months. But these gains were not enough for the extremist elements within Japan. They had received a fresh impetus from Hitler's successes, and were prepared to move far more boldly both on the home and foreign fronts. The War Minister, maneuvering for the set-up of an equally bold and impetuous Cabinet, suddenly offered his resignation. Thus, on July 16, 1940, the Yonai Cabinet crumbled.

XIII. Shadow Over Asia

Under the second Konoye Cabinet, formed July 22, 1940, the flood that had been sweeping over Japan since 1931 reached a new high. Territorial aims were enlarged. Expansion was no longer to be confined to China. The goal was now a "Greater East Asia," including all the rich colonial territories in southern Asiatic waters. At home, also, the pace quickened. The army leaders moved toward full suppression of the parties, and a reduction of the Diet's powers. Obstacles to foreign expansion and internal regimentation continued to exist, however, and slowed down the fascist advance.

In foreign policy, the Konoye Cabinet made two far-reaching moves. On September 27, 1940 it concluded a military alliance with Germany and Italy. By this alliance, as we have seen, Japan was allotted "Greater East Asia" for her "living space." This sphere, however, was not yet under Japanese control. It had to be won. So the second move was a step in the direction of winning it. It was a move into Indo-China.

In September 1940, a French-Japanese agreement admitted a limited number of Japanese troops to northern districts of the French colony of Indo-China. These troops were the entering wedge. Then Japan pushed her control southward to Saigon. Early in 1941, Tokyo dictated a settlement of the Thailand-Indo-China conflict, which she hoped would eventually yield her full control of Indo-China, and still greater powers over Thailand, where Japanese influence was already strong. And Saigon, we should add, is only 650 miles north of Singapore.

A HARD ROW TO HOE

In other respects, however, the Konoye Cabinet's expansionist program—like that of its predecessors—did not enjoy easy going. For the war in China was still not won. In November 1940 Japan formally recognized Wang Ching-wei's Nanking

regime (the puppet government she herself had created). But this step merely spotlighted Japan's failure to secure peace in China. Tokyo also undertook negotiations with the Soviet Union, but with little immediate result. Finally, the British and the Dutch strengthened the defenses of both Malaya and the Netherlands Indies, and the American fleet at Hawaii served as an eloquent warning against any move by Japan on Singapore, strategic key to southeast Asia.

THE HOME FRONT

On the home front, the Konoye Cabinet clamped down even firmer dictatorial control. All political parties "voluntarily" dissolved in the summer of 1940. There was a plan afoot to curb the Diet's influence by amending the Election Law to give fewer people votes. And the extremists began to organize a mass fascist party, with local units throughout the country.

These efforts achieved some practical results. The outspoken criticism marking previous Diet sessions was less apparent in 1940-41. The "near neighbor" groups, set up by the new fascist party, gave the authorities a means of checking up closely on popular opinion, and taking measures to suppress opposition as soon as it appeared. Economic difficulties were piling up, and the need for repression was becoming greater. Rationing of sugar, charcoal and matches, begun in 1940, was extended to rice early in 1941.

A HORSE TRADE

But the political struggle within Japan, even among its ruling circles, was not settled by the Konoye government's actions. On the contrary, it continued as strong as ever. A characteristic "deal" indicated the lines along which the struggle was being fought. The military-fascist groups were unwilling to permit a general election, due in 1941, to take place. On the other hand, the moderates opposed moves to revise the Election

Law and to strengthen state control over industry. In January 1941, a deal was made in which the extremists agreed to drop these moves, while the moderates consented to let the Diet run on without an election for one year, and to support the government's program in the meantime.

EXPANSION OR DEFEAT?

In the early months of 1941, Tokyo increasingly committed itself to a policy dictated by the results of a decade of aggression. Since 1937 Japan had spent nearly 20 billion yen on the war in China, or twice the total national debt in 1936. She had suffered more than a million casualties, in killed, wounded and diseased. In return for these great losses, she expected vast gains.

Thus "Greater East Asia" became the avowed goal of Japan's foreign policy. To Japan's rulers, it represented the full flowering of the "bloc economy" idea. They now considered not only Manchuria and China, but the whole of East Asia, necessary for such a bloc. The raw materials of southeast Asia, especially the oil, tin and rubber of the Indies and Malaya, were needed to make up the deficiencies of a "Japan-China-Manchoukuo" bloc. But even with these rich prizes Japan would not be entirely self-sufficient economically. She would still lack high-grade machinery and certain other products. Nevertheless, with the raw materials of East Asia firmly under her control, Japan believed she would have sufficient bargaining power to secure the foreign currency necessary for buying all she needed in the world market.

Japanese statesmen continually stressed this idea of an East Asiatic bloc in their speeches. To make its realization possible, they concluded the alliance with Germany. Barring an outright German victory in Europe, however, the difficulties which confront Tokyo's advance toward mastery of East Asia are still formidable.

For Japan's economic resources are at a low ebb. Industrial

production has begun to decline. Foreign trade is falling off, and reserves of foreign currency are low. China is unconquered, and relations with the Soviet Union are uncertain. The British Empire and the United States, which stand guard over southeast Asia, are the mainstays of Japan's foreign trade. By moving against them in that region, Japan might risk everything gained thus far. For the first time, she would be staking her future on a war with powers that control the seas and access to world markets. She would be facing all the dangers that she successfully avoided in the World War of 1914-18.

Japan's geographical location, close to the scene of action in the Far East, is still her great strategic advantage. Her economic deficiencies have been, and continue to be, her main source of weakness. The ratio between these two controlling factors may well determine the immediate future. Is Japan's new Empire to reach out over immensely larger areas, or is it to suffer its first great defeat?

SUGGESTED READING

BORTON, HUGH. *Japan Since 1931.* New York. Institute of Pacific Relations. 1940. Political and social developments within Japan during the past decade. Rather technical.

COLEGROVE, KENNETH W. *Militarism in Japan.* New York. World Peace Foundation. 1936. The army's role in Japan, and a study of the military-fascist movement. Fairly advanced but readable.

CROW, CARL. *He Opened the Door of Japan.* New York. Harper. 1939. The life of Townsend Harris, first American Minister to Japan (1856-62). Very readable.

ISHIMOTO, BARONESS. *Facing Two Ways.* New York. Farrar and Rinehart. 1935. A noted Japanese feminist leader tells the story of her life. Popular and readable.

NORMAN, E. HERBERT. *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State.* New York. Institute of Pacific Relations. 1940. Discussion of Japan's political and economic reforms during the Meiji era. Technical.

OMURA, BUNJI. *The Last Genro.* Philadelphia. Lippincott. 1938. The story of Prince Saionji's life, covering the whole period of Japan's modern development. Entertaining narrative style.

REISCHAUER, ROBERT K. *Japan: Government—Politics.* New York. Nelson. 1939. Sketches the growth of Japanese government from earliest times. Fairly advanced but readable.

RUSSEL, OLAND D. *The House of Mitsui.* Boston. Little Brown. 1939. Three centuries of the Mitsui family's history, beginning in Tokugawa times. Readable.

SANSOM, G. B. *Japan: A Short Cultural History.* New York. Century. 1931. The best recent history of Japan, covering events up to 1868. Technical.

YOUNG, A. MORGAN. *Imperial Japan, 1926-1938.* New York. Morrow. 1939. Also *Japan in Recent Times, 1912-1926.* New York. Morrow. 1931. Narrative accounts of more recent phases of Japanese history. Readable.

SUGGESTED PERIODICALS: *Amerasia; Asia; Far Eastern Survey;* and *Pacific Affairs.*

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OTHER HEADLINE BOOKS

AMERICA REARMS—The Citizen's Guide to National Defense. By William T. Stone. "Should serve to help many a puzzled reader sort out his own thoughts and arrive at a reasoned conclusion." —New Haven (Conn.) Journal-Courier

LOOK AT LATIN AMERICA. By Joan Raushenbush. With 25 maps and charts. "Written with shrewdness and simplicity, and made to order for the man in the street." —San Francisco (Cal.) Chronicle

CHALLENGE TO THE AMERICAS. By J. I. B. McCulloch. "An up-to-the-minute study of what many people are talking about, pan-Americanism, fifth column, aggressor nations and our own defense." —Minneapolis (Minn.) Tribune

SPOTLIGHT ON THE BALKANS. By P. B. Stoyan. "Simplifies . . . one of the most highly complicated and least understood aspects of Europe." —Hartford (Conn.) Times

THE BRITISH EMPIRE UNDER FIRE. By James Frederick Green. "An altogether excellent job of selection, emphasis and presentation." —American Foreign Service Journal

WAR ATLAS. By Emil Herlin and Varian Fry. "The most up-to-date and useful handbook of its kind; certainly the biggest bargain." —The New York Times

NEW HOMES FOR OLD—Public Housing in Europe and America. By William V. Reed and Elizabeth Ogg. With 95 illustrations. "A compact, sharp-outlined handbook on one of our most urgent concerns." —The New Republic

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